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SMITH'S

MAGAZINE

NOV. 1920

20 CENTS





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This Oliver Nine is a 26-year development. If any typewriter is worth \$100, it is this splendid model.

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Was
\$100

Now
\$64

Before
the War



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738 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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Vol. XXXII

SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 1

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These men decided to get into the great field of *Selling*—they learned about the wonderful opportunities in this fascinating profession—why Salesmen are always in demand—why they receive so much more money than men in other fields of work. **And they became Star Salesmen!**

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and a life of fascinating work, travel, contact with influential men. Just mail the coupon or write, and you will receive, without cost or obligation, proof of what the remarkable system of the National Salesmen's Training Association and its FREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE can do for you. In addition a great book on Salesmanship will be mailed to you without charge. You owe it to yourself to read the secret of big money in the wonderful field of Selling. Mail the coupon or write today.

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National Salesmen's Training Association,
Dept. 4-8 Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

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City
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C. W. Campbell, of Greensburg, Pa., writes: "My earnings for the past thirty days are \$1,562 and I won Second Prize in March, although I only worked two weeks during that month."

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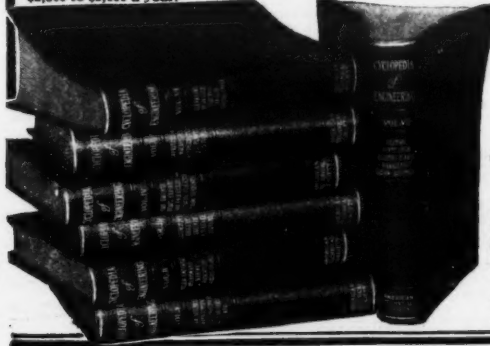
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SMITH'S MAGAZINE

Volume 32

NOVEMBER, 1920

Number 1

The Missing Life Line

By Elizabeth Irons Folsom

Author of "A Corner of His Heart," "The Arch Fear," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

Rarely has it been the good fortune of any magazine to offer its readers a story of more absorbing and thrilling interest than this romance of a young American singer. From its opening scenes, which are laid in Italy, to its last page in next month's issue, it is a story so dramatic, so stirring, so remarkable, that we don't want you to miss it.

A TWO-PART STORY—PART I.

CHAPTER I.

THE crack of a shot struck through the stillness of the April noon. A young man, leaning idly against the stone wall, turned, his face for an instant, surprised and unbelieving. Then his legs folded under him and let him down; his cheek scraped the stone wall as he went; his head lay against it when he was still.

There was no movement from the big house across the lawn. Its long windows stood open, the curtains swaying in and out. The broad stone veranda, flanked by wide, low steps and gay with flaunting pillows and wicker chairs, was untenanted. The sudden crisp sound had not attracted notice; the warm silence dominated again.

Between the wall and the house, there was a wide sweep of lawn edged with flower beds, among which a sprinkler flicked water as it whirled. There was the smell of wet earth and soaked grass. From the terrace beneath came the sound of voices and laughter of

olive pickers; far below lay the city, sleeping in the sun, and the bay still, with its morning glow of greens, pinks, crimsons—for it is in the morning that the water there catches color from the hills of Naples and flings it back shimmered with its own blue, unlike any other blue that the world holds.

The sun crept higher and the line of shade near the wall crept back; some spread so that quiet fingers lay in the grass in the glow.

An hour earlier, Cesare Sabelli had come down the steps and walked across to the wall which held in the garden, and had stared over the city to where curled the smoke, climbing from the restless heart of the mountain which watches over Naples. Off there, was something very dear to him; behind Vesuvius, up a wonder road, high among lemon orchards. Each morning when he was at home, he came out there to stand and do homage, to send his love and his thought to one who he knew was watching.



"There is no reason why you should not know her name—nor her. I—contessa—she—we are married."

That particular morning was weighted. He had dawdled to the end; he could do so no longer, and he was glad. He had fought his training and had won, and would dally no longer. He was glad that it was to be over; the putting-off, the make-believe, the shifting, the covering up. The time was definitely at hand to speak. He caught his breath and looked off over the mountain.

"Cesare."

He turned his head quickly, two lines came between his brows. Something like sullenness was the quality of his answer.

"Si, contessa."

"Will you kindly give me your attention—at a more convenient distance?"

Countess Tullia put her lorgnette between her eyes and her son-in-law, as he approached her. It was a dreadful thing to see Countess Tullia put up her lorgnette; even when directed elsewhere, it chilled the beholder. Without the glass, the countess was imposing enough. No human being had ever willingly approached her, as far as her son-in-law had observed. Her deep slate-colored eyes, her long straight nose, her chin which set out at its tip, her thin, thin lips, and her high white pompadour,

could ice instantly any emotion that ever was. But with the gold lorgnette, there could be no hope in anything; that there were diamonds circling it added the final touch to the impressiveness. Her cheeks were now faintly pink; that, in itself, was a bad sign. Cesare could remember but one other time when he had seen that color, and the whole establishment had been in chaos for days thereafter.

Cesare himself, had he but known it, had that morning a wash of stubbornness over his courtesy. As nearly as his birth and breeding allowed him, he looked defiance at his dead wife's mother. His dark eyes, which had always the dreamer's vagueness, were drawn a bit at the corners, his straight, tall figure was more square at the shoulders; much negligence had gone, new fixity of purpose had touched him. He was ready for this occasion, although he had been taught never to defy age; to the age of woman, he was especially to submit. Every precept, practice, and tendency lay in gentle obeisance to those who, through years or experience, should know better than he. It was impossible for him to stand before that stately person without his head slightly bent, without his mood as receptive as he could compass it. He could have done no more if he had loved the countess; he could have done no less under any provocation.

"You know, of course, what I am to speak about, Cesare."

"I am waiting for you to tell me, contessa."

"Do you mean that you do not know?"

He remained silent, still in the listening and respectful attitude.

She waited. His jaw squared itself slightly, impelled by the alien thought that he would not help her; that he could wait as long as she could.

That she felt his strange state of mind he knew, because the pink climbed higher on her cheek bones. So he was not unprepared for the method of attack.

"I never expected that I would one day say that I was glad my daughter was dead."

He made no reply; there seemed no words for a statement like that.

"She is spared the disgrace that you are bringing upon this house."

"Disgrace?"

"Disgrace. For the world is seeing

that you have very soon forgotten your wife."

"I have not forgotten her."

"Then more shame to you! Could you not wait a decent time, before making yourself conspicuous with a woman?"

"It is—it was five years."

"Five years! What are five years, to guard and respect the memory of a wife like Consuelo, before entering upon a disgraceful liaison?"

"I am not doing that, contessa."

"Then what do you call it?"

He shifted his position slightly. The occasion had no precedent. To say what he must say, and to say it with the respect due Consuelo's mother, was his present task.

"You are referring to my acquaintance with—Miss Fey?"

"I do not know the name," said the countess scornfully. "I have never known the name of a woman of that kind!"

"There is no reason why you should not know her name—nor her. I—contessa—she—we are married."

"Married!" She did not drop her lorgnette, she flung it away. It snapped its slight chain and glittered itself into a flower bed. Cesare picked it up and offered it gravely, ceremoniously. His face was flushed, but his eyes were bright and his lips parted. He had achieved the impossible—broken the news to the contessa, and survived. It was victory, such victory as he had never seen accomplished. Now, if only the lorgnette had broken—

Then he looked at the countess curiously. The pink had been replaced on her cheeks by a pallor.

"Married!" she repeated. "You forgot your vow to your wife!"

"No, contessa," he answered, and stopped. Then he went on, speaking eagerly, boyishly. "No, I did not forget, but I knew—I knew Consuelo better than you did, contessa. I knew that

when she asked me to promise that I would not marry again, that it was the illness—the weakness of that last hour. She would never have done it, otherwise. In her real mind, she would never have asked of me that I spend my life alone. What she would have asked if she had known what she was saying, was that I should always remember our life together; that I should always love her in the memory of that life. I always shall, *contessa*."

He had seen her beat a dog once; a small dog and a small whip; but she had broken it in her hands. And they looked then, those yellowed hands, with their shining stones, as if they might yet break whips.

"Married! When?"

"A year—nearly."

She laughed, and again the whip curled in his memory.

"Oh, I see! There is something to make right and you have taken this way."

"We were married at La Cava. The records are there to be seen, *contessa*."

"Then why have you not told it?"

He flushed.

"Because I have been a coward. It was well enough known where she—we have lived. There was no secret there. And as for bringing her home—I waited—"

"You expected I would be gone to Vienna, leaving your house."

He lifted his head.

"*Sì, contessa.*"

She laughed again.

"It was her idea?"

"She knows nothing about it. Have the truth, *contessa*. You have dominated—you were going back to your home for a stay of some length; at that time we could have been alone to begin the new life. She did not care. We were happy. She was willing to wait."

"You would bring her here! Into Consuelo's place! A woman of the stage!"

He saw her fingers tremble among the laces of her gown. He felt a sudden pity. After all, she was just an old woman—one who had frightened people into doing what she liked—but an old woman. One who trembled at the strangeness of being opposed—but old.

"Let me tell you about her, *contessa*," he said eagerly. "She is such a girl as—as I would have liked Consuelo to know, and I cannot say more than that, can I? She had meant to go on the stage, yes—after her voice was finished. She came here from America, expecting to be ready to sing soon, but the teachers here—they said her voice had been placed wrong. They have been working with it and she is just beginning to use the new voice."

"I cannot believe that you will make it necessary for me to leave my home here and take Tito——"

"Take Tito!"

"Certainly! Consuelo wished me to take her place with the child. You do not intend to show disrespect to *all* her wishes, I suppose."

A flood of the blood of his ancestors came into Cesare's throat and loosened his gentleness and reserve with its surge.

"Tito is mine. The house is mine, *contessa*. I shall take possession of both."

He reached out his hand to stop her. She swept past. Then he walked back to the end of the garden and waited for the blood of his ancestors to get down where it belonged, so that he might remember that she was an old woman. And, as he stood there, came the crack of the shot, and he slid down, with his head against the wall.

Just beyond where Cesare Sabelli lay, there was a gate from which steps led down to the first terrace. There came the sound of a light thump; a step at a time, first sharply, as one foot came



With its mouth still open, it stopped crying and looked straight at Gerard with dark, great eyes which were really intent, nearly curious.

up; then lightly, as the other joined it. There was also the faint rattle of something that clinked. The latch ticked, the gate scraped as from a weight hanging from it, then swung back, and Tito Sabelli, five years old, dragged in the battered toy that clanked.

He left the gate open. Tito never closed gates or doors—that was the part of Maddelena or some other of his subjects; he had nothing to do with the closing of anything. At once, across

the turf, he saw the heap where the sun was touching it. His mouth opened wide. A new thing, a brand-new thing lying there on the grass! Five years had not brought so suddenly new a thing to the lawn there.

Tito was disheveled from his journey on the terrace. One button of his white kilt was off; there was a strip of flesh through the gap; both stockings were down over his red shoes; the thick fringe over his forehead stood up, and

at the back, his hair bunched out in a rough mass, because he had lain on the ground and kicked his heels among the olive pickers below.

He stared at the new object on the grass and took a couple of furtive steps toward it. Quite new and very interesting, that crumpled mystery! He edged around to get a view of the other side. He went nearer and squatted with a hand on each knee for a close investigation of what, of course, had been placed there for his entertainment.

He looked closely.

Then Tito screamed—yelled with all the strength of the strong Sabelli lungs.

Like the appearance of figures on a cuckoo clock, heads and bodies appeared from the upper windows, from the eaves of the big house. The retinue of the household was on the qui vive constantly for that voice.

Down from the veranda ran a woman with a red scarf circling her head, her white apron whipped back from her blue skirt. Across her breast the scarlet of her kerchief made a brilliant stain. She caught the child away from the heap on the ground, cuddled him in her arms, and fled back without a glance at anything else.

But they were coming now from the house, and in a few moments Cesare Sabelli was carried in. A messenger streaked down the hill to bring the physician.

A shot through the apex of the lung, touching a nerve as it went and causing partial and temporary paralysis—recovery slow, but probable. Such was the verdict of the physician when he looked at Countess Tullia in the embrasure of the bay window across the room from the bed. The yellow of the countess' face was bleached, but her drab eyes met his as straightly as eyes could look.

He hesitated.

"Now, concerning the—accident and

the steps of investigation, contessa. The wound was not self-inflicted. The proper officials——" The doctor stopped. Countess Tullia looked at him as if she held the entire investigating system of Italy under the firm bejeweled hand resting on the window sill.

"An investigation would simply make it harder for us," she said. Her cold smile touched the doctor chillily, but gratefully; it was not every one who had seen the countess smile.

"There will be talk," he suggested.

"Need there be?"

"I don't see how else."

"The servants will not talk if I forbid it."

The physician thought that was probably true. They would not talk if they expected to remain upon the same planet as the countess.

He gathered that she expected him to feel the same way. He did not. He did not want to. Doctor Sagi had a reputation to maintain; also, he was used to having persons in awe of him. So he said nothing.

Countess Tullia came closer and smiled again.

"The fact is—you are my old friend—Cesare has had an unfortunate connection. Any investigation would uncover that—must uncover it," she said meaningly. "He will not care to prosecute."

She knew he had received the impression she meant. She knew he envisioned the occasion as not unusual.

"I see," he said, and the countess smiled again.

"We would be grateful if the impression of the illness would not touch the—accident. Maddelena will nurse him; she is devoted to us, especially to the child; she adored his mother. No gossip will go out from this house."

"Well," said the doctor, "I hope I do not talk too much, contessa."

"I am sure you do not," she said, and

there were four smiles recorded for a five-minute talk.

Cesare Sabelli came back, after a few days, into a world of pain. From the first he had run up a temperature. The physician could not understand why it did not yield to remedies which he explained carefully each day to Maddelena. But the fever stayed; it muddled the brain; it muddled the words, so that the listening women—two of them—did not always understand. Maddelena moved noiselessly about the darkened room, her face sullen, her black eyes watching, her strong arms efficient. She measured the fever doses carefully; then poured them as carefully from the open window into the trees, which came close.

The contents of the bottle sank regularly. The physician frowned when he looked at it and at the man on the bed, who flung his unbandaged arm and muttered through dry lips. He changed the medicine and again the stern Italian woman measured the dose and administered it to the turf below the window. Strong youth battled the fever with its own strength unaided.

Below stairs, Countess Tullia watched the mails. After a week a letter came, which she examined closely. She carried it to her room, opened it, read it carefully and without expression, tore it into minute bits, and went to sit on the terrace.

This went on from day to day—the little method upstairs and the little method downstairs. It went on until youth conquered and Cesare Sabelli opened sane eyes one day, felt feebly of his bandages, and spoke. The inquiry was for letters.

"No, signor, none," said Maddelena.

CHAPTER II.

Gerard Carlton just caught the express as it was ready to move north from Rome. The tiny whistle had been tooting during the last block of his run.

The guard had his hand up and only by his special grace did Gerard shove his bag ahead and feel the door scrape his coat tails as it closed after him.

But that was the way Gerard liked to catch trains; he worked upon the old "train - goes - in - three - minutes - drive-down-in-two" system.

He stood in the corridor to catch his breath after his run. At once, the wail of an infant took his attention. It was loud, eerie, piercing; it had a permanent sound unlike a sudden burst, as if it had been coming a long time.

He moved along and looked into the first compartment. There it was—a small bundle bending in what seemed to be the wrong way, a woman over it. Except for the two, the compartment was empty, but Gerard passed on in quest for more quiet quarters.

The next section was full and so was the next. It occurred to him that his had not been the first thought to evade the child; others had "beat him to it." At last he turned in, took a seat by the door, and settled himself. In came the wail, loud and prolonged.

The fat man opposite lifted his hands.

"Great cats!" he cried. "That's been going on all the way from Naples!"

"It provides them with a section alone, all right," said Gerard with a smile.

"Well, I guess, yes! Nobody wants a closer seat to a noise like that!"

Two Italian women gathering, in a general way, what the talk was about, nodded and also raised deprecating hands.

The train sped on. The air was thick and hot; there was the smell of luncheons, of too-ripe fruits, of garments that had been worn too long, of the dusty plush of the car seats, too long unaided. The woman next to Carlton untied a package; a buttery roll came out and struck him on its way to the floor; another followed as she leaned to recover the first. Her sharp elbow



8 "Tito's nurse came then and took hold of him. I asked again, to make sure, to be sure, that the child knew. I must be sure! I asked again."

sank into his knee. There was the smell of pent-up cheese.

Gerard looked across at the fat man, who compressed his lips and turned his eyes heavenward. The train whipped around a curve, and the woman and her luncheon became again parts of Gerard's location. Her shoulder edged him. While she tried to uncork a bottle of wine, the buttery rolls slid again.

Gerard got up and went out into the corridor. Sometimes he had been able to get a camp chair and sit there. There were four hours ahead of him before he should reach Florence.

There was no camp chair and he leaned against the window frame and watched the country speed by. No one spoke in the compartment opposite; not a voice broke through the hot air except the baby's, which rose, fell, and rose again. He passed their door and looked in. The seat opposite the woman and child looked broad and as cool as the day could produce. And the thing had been howling like that all the way from Naples! Hideous! It should be getting tired, such a small person as it apparently was! Did all babies yell like that? He had known his sister's pretty well, and they had not done so—at least, not perpetually. Sick, likely. These Italian babies were not properly taken care of.

Suddenly the sound stopped abruptly, as if from desperate exhaustion. He waited, and as it did not immediately begin, he stepped to the opening, hesitated, went in, and sat down on the seat nearest the door. The silence continued.

Then Gerard looked for the first time at the woman holding the child. American! No mistaking it! No other women traveled in such pretty shoes, topped by silk stockings which matched the skirt which said "New York" as plainly as a label. No woman other than American put on a tight hat that way or had such a slim throat held

so well. Gerard could tell an American woman as far as he could see one. He had one then, just opposite him, her arms full of baby.

She looked up at him. There was no question about her being tired; probably her eardrums ached from the long din she had held close. There were blue shadows about her eyes and about her mouth, there were creases coming out from under her hat between her eyes; little beads of perspiration stood over the slight curve of the cheek nearest him. Her ears were lovely—he doted upon beautiful ears. Her hair, which was pinned without straggling locks, was oddly brown, as if it had sunlight all over it. Distinctly a lovely young woman, although tired and very cross, her white blouse ruffled where a restless, small, damp head had been.

He was surprised and pleased. But as he looked, the small bundle bent itself again and the wail recommenced. Gerard could not well get up and leave at once as if too annoyed to stay; he could not treat an American girl like that. Also, he could not sit opposite that noise and pretend not to notice it. So he said:

"Is the baby sick?"

"I suppose she must be," said the girl.

He moved opposite and looked down at the child. It was lying on a pillow in her lap, its elfin face a criss-cross of wrinkles, its eyes tightly shut. The interior of its mouth was very clean; its little tongue waved above its rose-pink gums; its tiny hands clutched the air. Two small knees were not where they should have been in pictures of cherubs.

"I wonder what is the matter," he said loudly and thoughtfully. "Couldn't some of those women help you?"

"They just looked in and scowled," she answered.

He touched one waving hand, then grasped it firmly. The baby opened its

eyes; the creases about them lowered. With its mouth still open, it stopped crying and looked straight at Gerard with dark, great eyes which were really intent, nearly curious.

"See the tears," said Gerard compassionately.

"Yes." She looked at the child as if she were afraid of it.

The survey of Gerard finished, the crinkles spread again about his eyes and the wail began once more.

The girl looked up despairingly.

"She has cried all the way from Naples," she said helplessly.

Gerard considered.

"My sister used to turn them over on the other side, to rest them."

"What other side?"

"On their—stomachs."

"Oh! And would you——"

"Let's see," considered Gerard again. "It must be uncomfortable. Let's consider it reasonably. I wouldn't like to lie on that pillow myself; it's hot and creased. If you will lift—her—up, I will see if I can fix it."

She lifted the child gingerly. Gerard believed she had never taken care of it before; she did not gather it, as he had seen his sister do.

The pillow was, as he had said, hot and creased. He shook it vigorously and turned it over.

"Try putting this on the seat beside you, for a change. Let it cool a minute. Now, he added desperately, "if you would put her down, other side up, on her stomach, maybe she would like it."

"You think it would be all right?"

"I'm sure," he said positively.

The baby was lowered tentatively to the pillow, the dented little back uppermost. The girl, with swift inspiration, slipped her hand under its clothing, rubbed the hot back lightly, lifting the clothes where they were tight.

The baby stopped crying instantly. It turned its head to one side and spread

its hands out over the smooth pillow with a short, gasping sigh of relief.

"See!" said Gerard triumphantly. "It's the change. Nice little thing," he said gently, sitting down where the child could fix him with its great black eyes. He said the words over again and the baby listened to them and watched him, while the girl continued her slight stroking movement. In an incredibly short moment, the black eyes closed, the mite of a mouth relaxed, the tiny fingers stretched, clutched, and loosened, and the long sigh was the beginning of slow breaths.

"She's asleep," whispered Gerard.

Cautiously the girl removed her hand, stealthily she straightened the clothes, warily she sat back and folded her hands and looked across at Gerard.

"Well!" she said.

"Well!" he answered her and laughed, very low and quietly, youth grasping a bit of humor from the moment.

"I wonder why I could not have thought of trying that," she considered, not answering his laugh. "You see, she is the first baby I have ever known, and she is only six weeks old."

"I have known a great many," said Gerard largely. "My sister has four."

"Four!" The tone of the word spoke cataclysm.

"She doesn't mind it. It's easy when you know how. The baby wanted a change. It's queer how quick they know," he went on learnedly. "She wanted a change. She was tired of you."

"Quite likely," said the girl quickly. "That would be natural enough."

There were distinctly straight lines between her eyes. Her voice had a lot of bitterness in it and the set of her chin was savage. Gerard, watching her, met her eyes, and his first thought was that blue eyes were not, of necessity, mild and gentle, that they could flash and have depths of somberness not as-



Cesare looked back at the countess. "Was that your understanding, contessa—that it may have been a stray and chance shot?"

sociated with that color. And they were blue, too, like sections of the Italian sky outside the windows.

He was immensely curious at once. Was she the mother of the child? Naturally, he decided. No one but a mother would be lugging a six-weeks' old infant about the country.

"I thank you very much," she said. "I was quite at my wit's end."

She put her head back and closed her eyes. Gerard did not intend to let the acquaintance lapse in that way.

"Yes, you would be," he said cordially. "It's hard work," he added, as if he had traveled with infants for long years. "I knew at once you were American, and to be that is a passport to acquaintance, isn't it?"

"That and—kindness," she said, and smiled. Heavens! How different she was when she smiled!

"Did you come from Naples?"

"No. From Ravello. I did not stop at Naples, and that is why we were both so tired."

"I don't know Ravello. Lovely, is it?"

"Oh, yes," she said indifferently. "I suppose so. But I hate Italy—and the Italians." The last part of the sentence seemed to speak itself. Gerard, watching, saw her mouth again put its curves into a line, and her chin creased with the set of her lips. Yes, he was immensely curious.

He leaned over and looked at the baby.

"I'm glad I happened in. Maybe I can help you at the end of your journey. Florence?"

"No, Paris."

"George! That's some undertaking with this," said Gerard, indicating the sleeping bundle. "I hope you have some one in Paris to meet you."

"No."

"No? It's no joke to get in there alone. I promise you. You speak the language?"

"Some of it."

He smiled at the answer.

"I think we Americans all speak just some of it."

"I mean I speak just what I happen to have learned. I mean I sing in French, but—I have not learned much else."

"You sing?" asked Gerard alertly. That touched his closest interest. That was why he had been in Rome—to see a girl who could sing and would perhaps sing for him.

"Yes, I have been studying in Milan—until recently."

For his life he could not help glancing at the baby. Six weeks, she had said. No, he could not ask her how long since she had studied at Milan.

"Have you sung in public?"

"Yes, but not here. I hoped to."

"Bad luck?"

"No-o. I sang in concert in New York."

"Sang in New York? Would you mind telling me your name? You see,

that is my business—to find singers. I have just been to Rome to hear a girl whom I hoped to engage."

Her eyes opened widely.

"To engage?"

"Yes—for chorus or concert. Will you tell me your name? I wonder if I know it."

She hesitated.

"Alice Fey."

"No, I don't know it. Soprano?"

"That is what it was. Over here, they have made it contralto."

"Yes, they do that trick. Shall you study in Paris?"

Her eyes turned to the pillow by her side.

"I don't know."

Gerard looked at the fleeing country. He wondered what the story was—there was one, of course. Was it the old one, the world-wide one? He could not think it—and yet, she certainly did act queerly.

"I'll tell you what," he began. "I'd like to hear you sing. I'm always keen for fresh voices. I don't suppose you are ready to go back to God's country—or do you want to sing in public?"

"I want very much to," she answered with the first interest she had really shown. "It would be a solution for—many things. Wouldn't it be odd if through this journey—"

He smiled. She was building the quick castles of youth. He could see them go up, turret by turret.

He decided to be businesslike, and at once, so he told her his name, the organization which he represented, something of the way in which the work of reaching new singers was conducted, the anxiety of his management to make a mark in the new method of searching out fresh voices, not taking for minor positions anything that presented itself.

She heard him, leaning a bit forward, one hand steadying the bundle on the pillow, the other lying palm up in her

lap close to him. He looked at the cupped fingers and the deep, soft palm as he talked. Her hands had attracted him from the first; they were like her ears, unusual in their beauty.

"And so," he finished, "I would like to hear you sing, after you get to Paris and have decided what you want to do. I might be able to offer you something—at least, give you a chance, if you would take a small thing. Of course—the little girl——" he glanced down at the child and hesitated.

Her lips parted and closed again. Then she said:

"She is my sister's child. I am taking her to her mother in Paris."

"Oh," said Gerard. He wondered if he believed her, and he looked out of the window and meditated, while she lay back and closed her eyes. Did he believe it? She wore no wedding ring—but she was hardly the person to be owning a baby without one. She had said she was taking the child to her sister in Paris—from Ravello—and it was six weeks old. The sister must be some traveler to have made the journey ahead of six weeks.

Then why was the girl opposite him savage? She was that. It was only when they were talking of her voice that she had seemed really young. As she lay back that moment, her face was taut. She had not shown enough anxiety about her voice to produce that look, and voices don't do that. Gerard thought he was astute and he said to himself that neither voice nor lack of voice nor disappointment nor care nor sister's babies brought that look into

the face of a young woman. He had observed sagely, and about the girl opposite there was mystery.

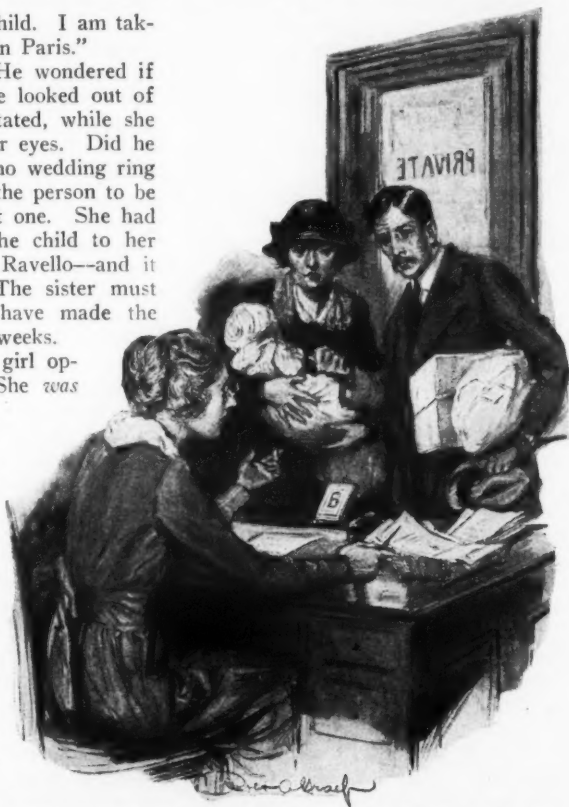
He interrupted her quiet.

"If you will take my Paris address and let me know where you are, I would like to hear you sing and see if I can offer you anything. I will be in Paris in ten days. You will be there then?"

"I suppose so."

He gave her a card, after writing upon it the name of his hotel in Paris.

She took it and closed her eyes again.



"We would like, if you please, to leave this child here, until its folks come for it."

Gerard sat back and watched her. It was only when he knew his journey was nearly over, that he moved. She started, looked up, and smiled, and all her young beauty became suddenly alive.

"Here's where I get off," he said. "My recipe acts like a sleeping potion on the youngster there." As he moved to get up, he looked down again at her hands, where the palm of the right one lay again uppermost. He bent down.

"Pardon me, but that's an odd palm you have." He did not touch her hand, but merely bent above it. "I had the palmist fever one time, and I'm always trying out what I learned. I never saw as lineless a hand as you have. Do you know that you have hardly a life line at all? By all the rules of palmistry, you should have been dead long ago."

"Oh, I shall live!" she said crisply. "I am not of the kind who die. I can defy all fortune tellers or sciences. There is no danger of my dying."

There was the savage again, striking through all else about her.

"Well, live until I see you in Paris, anyhow," he said gayly. "Don't forget. Here is Florence. Do you know it?"

"No. And I don't want to. Good-by, and thank you."

"Good-by, little lady," he said to the placid sleeper. He touched one of the tiny, crumpled hands and laughed with a little embarrassed fondness. It had no answering gleam in the straight blue eyes looking at him. Nor did they turn to watch him, as he crossed the platform outside. He looked back to see.

CHAPTER III.

As Gerard Carlton had suggested, an arrival alone in Paris is not altogether a joy; especially to one accompanied by a young child and all the appurtenances thereunto appertaining. Alice Fey had

not made a confidant of the useful young man on the train between Rome and Florence; she had not told him that she knew quite well where she was going in Paris, and that the small hotel was one where she had stayed many times, and that the two spinsters managing it had been told of her coming.

The cab was very full of belongings when it stopped in front of the Hotel Michel, just as the gray of twilight blanketed the streets. There would be one of the sisters in the small, plain room to the right of the entrance. They took careful turns, but, as they were so precisely alike in appearance, it took a long-resident guest really to understand that there were two of them. A slight change of mood, an annoyance, or a joy, would take from either face its own personality and Mademoiselle Michel in anger might be Mademoiselle Baptiste, or contrary. But, as to temperament, there was the difference of continents between them. Mademoiselle Michel was fiercely proper, savagely intolerant of the irregular, while Mademoiselle Baptiste carried a secret sympathy for anything that was or would be or might have been romance. There had been a recalcitrant half-lover in Mademoiselle Baptiste's history, and her view of life trailed along after her recollection of him.

Alice Fey, who had lived at the Michel during two years of study, had wondered which of the two sisters she would be obliged to approach first with the new, soft bundle in her arms which had little to do with music students. If Mademoiselle Michel, her mind hardly grasped what it might mean; but if Mademoiselle Baptiste— She felt a little warm at the thought of her and was not so afraid.

It was Mademoiselle Baptiste. She got up at once from her chair. The sisters did not usually rise to receive guests. She spoke in her careful English.

"So—Mademoiselle Fey—your message came to us gratifyingly. We have not your old room, but another——" She stopped, and Alice Fey, without looking up, knew where Mademoiselle Baptiste's gaze was centered. For a wonder, the baby slept.

"I wrote my letter in my old name, Mademoiselle Baptiste, because you would not know me by the new one. You had not heard of my marriage?"

"No, no. Not at all. Not in the least," said Mademoiselle Baptiste hurriedly. Straight into her French heart had flashed the swing of romance. She had not kept a hotel for twenty years for nothing. Pale girls with babies in their arms and gentle stories about absent husbands were not new to her. To the other sister they acted as the torch to powder, but not so to Mademoiselle Baptiste. She was willing to hear and then judge; not judge first, as was the hurtling system of Mademoiselle Michel.

"Your husband—is into the cab upon the outside? I fear that the room reserved for you——"

"Oh, it will be quite all right," interrupted Alice Fey. "My husband will not be here for a short time. Mademoiselle. I am sure I shall like what you have for me."

Mademoiselle Baptiste was approaching close to the bundle in the crook of the girl's arm. She came near with a startled, wondering look, a little afraid, very curious. But both emotions blended with the look of woman—the universal woman light in her face and her lips half smiling because of it.

"Mon Dieu!" she murmured. "How verree small! It has verree little age, I am sure. Mon Dieu!" She touched one crumpled fist and her face grew pink; she looked excited, eager.

"I will—I will go up with you myself and see that it is comfortable. I would like to see the infant—more complete, madame." She had changed her

form of address deftly. Long years of experience had given that facility.

"Thank you very much. Is there—there is no one in the house I used to know, I suppose?"

"Non—oui, madame, Mademoiselle Bates—she is still here. I will send word that you have arrive."

"No, no. Oh, no," said the girl quickly. Mademoiselle Baptiste dropped her hand from the child.

"Why not?" she asked sharply. There was coming an hour of reckoning with her sister, anyhow; she would not give that hour too many possibilities; therefore, her voice was quick and she looked as if she might be Mademoiselle Michel herself.

Alice Fey heard and saw. She remembered that life was not to be any too smooth at best, and that it would take piloting to make it at all safe. No use going to pieces for slight things. So she laughed a little and said that she should prepare to see any one.

"You see, I have come straight from southern Italy, mademoiselle, and I am dirty beyond belief, and tired. But do let Miss Bates know that I am here and—you are awfully good to me, Mademoiselle Baptiste."

She heard her own voice give way as she spoke and she knew that the Frenchwoman must hear it, too. They were in the room by that time. The girl went to the window and stood there for a moment. She met the eyes of the older woman when she turned. Alice Fey could not know that she had set to flaming stealthily some fires of memory buried for long under the ashes of a spinster's life. But she felt vaguely that Mademoiselle Baptiste would see to it that a tale was provided which would stand the analysis yet to be made by the rigorous member of the management, and she felt, too, that the little family newly installed in number thirty had found a friend.

Left alone, Alice unpacked hastily.



"Do you mind?" she asked very low. "Do you mind if I do this?"

Unless Marian Bates had changed since she had last seen her, she would be flashing in at once. She knitted her brows. She had never cared especially for Marian when they had met at Paris and had studied under the same master. There were no reservations about Marian—she was big and strong and chock-full of verve. Because her clothes matched her speech in its easy startlingness, because for her there

were no such things as conventions, she had not cared especially for her. If she had known Marian was there, she would almost rather have sought an unknown place.

But as she fed and quieted the child in the brief respite which would compass only Marian's ignorance of her arrival, she began to feel something like comfort in the presence under that roof of a girl who didn't care, who was





fearless, faithful, too. Even her roughness gathered value as Alice listened.

The rap on the door was distinctive. No one else would rap like that, but Alice really clung a little tightly to the vigorous shoulders which were at hand.

"Well, they tell me you have annexed a baby. Incidentally a husband—but what is he compared with a miracle? You lucky thing! A baby to play with, whenever you feel like it. Show me!"

Alice waved her hand to the bed. She knew with quick intuition that Marian was putting a good face on. Whatever the situation was, Marian did not know, but she was starting cheerfully. Then, too, she did not look at Alice—because her voice had cracked or because of something else. But, whatever the reason, it was a kind one, Alice was sure.

"How do they build them so small?" Marian was saying at the bed. "Is it possible this mite will ever grow to the size of me? I'm going to take her up and rock her, Alice. I want to look like the pictures—madonna and child, you know."

"She isn't used to being rocked."

"Well, she might as well get used to some of the joys of life. This shall be my job. What's her name?"

"She isn't named."

"Just heavens! At this vast age and not named! I have named my first three children already and no man has ever wanted to marry me. But I have my names ready, anyhow. Oh, how dear it is! See it shut its eyes, one at a time. You cunning, cunning thing! What are you going to do with it when you go to class, Alice? Shall you take up with the professor?"

Alice looked at her across the room. Marian was not going to ask any questions. It must look pretty bad then! She had accepted the baby and jumped over the time of their separation. She intended to let that time alone. A fresh

start, which should take up the professor and the old life—no! Marian was not going to ask questions.

She sat in a rocking-chair, doing, as she had said, the "madonna-and-child act." She was a big girl, forty pounds overweight, with wonderful gold, shining hair—not a surface gold, like peroxide, but a color which was deep and thick and heavy, which had brownish shades where the coils were thickest. She had creamy skin and round, pale-gray eyes, which only black lashes redeemed. She was sitting with her knees crossed, one foot as high as the chair arm to make a deep, wide couch for the baby, who waved its arms luxuriously and made a first sound of content.

No, Marian was not going to ask questions. It was as bad as that—the situation! The anger, savage and primitive, which had been plain to Gerard Carlton on the train, surged again and colored her face. Marian, whom she had looked upon as an inferior, was accepting her and her child unconditionally—as a matter of charity, in fact, because Marian was kind. That she should be placed in a position to be thus accepted, fired her. She had made no plan of real action; she had waited to see how things would turn. Well, they had turned! She would not be considered what Marian Bates chose to consider her.

"You need not go to sleep," Marian was saying to the child. "That is the worst thing about you babies—you sleep all the time and don't give aunties a chance to see you at all. Such big, black eyes! Where did you get them, little girl?"

"She got them from her father." Alice's voice was sharp and firm.

Marian did not look up, but made some unintelligible remark in the fantastic jargon of a child lover.

"Why don't you ask me where I have been, Marian? Why do you treat me

as if my past would not bear speaking of?"

"You will talk when you please, my dear."

"Do you think there is—the usual story here?"

"I don't care whether there is or not. Right here, Alice—I am not asking anything and I am not speculating. You are here, this little thing is here, and I'll do what I can to help take care of it, because I shall like to. It will entertain me. There is no objection to my being entertained, I suppose?"

Alice Fey came away from the window where she had been leaning, watching the two with cold eyes. She came across the room slowly, drew a chair near the swaying rocker, and sat down.

"Yes—she is here—the little thing, as you say. She—no matter how I feel about it—she is to be taken care of."

"That is the idea I intended to convey."

"And how—am I going to do it? I have less than one hundred dollars. How can I study? What can I do with her? I have no one to appeal to. No one to help——" She stopped.

Marian rose and put the baby on the bed, covered it carefully, patted it more than once. Then she came back to where the other girl was sitting, stiffly looking at a point outside the window, too far off for eyes to see.

Marian put her heavy white hand on the other girl's shoulder.

"Go to it, my dear. Get it off your chest. Talking to me will be like talking into a well. I'll not give it out. It's a pity if two good live girls can't put up a scheme that will work out. I mean it right! If you'd kept off the subject, I would have. As you have brought it up, go to it, Alice. Maybe I can suggest."

Alice Fey looked at her friend with dry eyes—dry, hot eyes, burned by the flame inside over which the cooling

wash of tears had never spread. She looked stern and her lips curled.

"Shall I tell you his name?"

"Suit yourself."

"Then I will not."

"All right."

"His name is Cesare Sabelli—of the Italian nobility."

"Whew!"

"I went to Milan, you know, when I left here more than a year ago."

"Yes, I remember."

"I could have had a chance in opera there, in the fall. I was working hard, doing well. Even the master said so. Oh, I wonder if I will ever again feel the joy of doing good work, of really getting where I am aiming!"

"Sure thing, you will. Buck up, Alice!"

"Then—I met—him. You would not believe the rush of the way he made love to me. It took me off my feet. He——" She stopped and swallowed hard.

"Yes, they do it that way in Italy, I've heard," said the other girl coolly.

"I forgot that I was nearly ready to sing. I forgot everything but what he said. I—I ran away with him, the second week I knew him. To Sorrento. We were married at La Cava."

She waited for a reply. She did not get it. Marian did not look up.

"You do not believe that we were married?"

"My dear, this is your story. It is of no consequence what I believe."

"But you do not believe that we were married—that the records are there at La Cava, where any one can see?"

"Well, then—I don't get the point of your traipsing about the country with milk bottles," Marion replied, indicating the traveling nursery kit. "Married to the Italian nobility and living in the Hotel Michel doesn't—er—track, as it were."

"The records are there."

"I'll take your word for it. Then you quarreled."

"No, no, never! Never!"

Marian Bates looked at her then. She saw, as Gerard Carlton had seen, the way in which youth mounted; how the lines were put away; how lovely the curves of her mouth, how soft the tender eyes—how quite another girl was there beside her. But Marian Bates did not speak.

"No, we never quarreled. It was heaven together there! The quaintest villa—all rose trees! Oh—Marian!"

"But why not the ancestral castle and the armorial bearings? Where were the escutcheons and the whole layout?"

"At his home near Naples. His wife had been dead five years. There was a child—a little boy—at his home."

"Why didn't he take you there?"

"This is what you are not going to understand. I do. That is, I did—in a way. He was romantic—a lover of poetry, of art, of just such things as you might expect from his bringing up. He told me about his wife, Consuelo, and of how much he loved her and of how he felt when she died. I was pleased that he talked of her and loved her. Since her death, his home had been in charge of her mother, and she—well, you would say, he was afraid of her. I didn't quite say so, because I knew him. How he hated words! It was a bodily hurt for him when things jarred. I can't make you see. I couldn't see myself, if I had not known him. He was afraid of her—yes—I suppose so—but not in—"

"Not in the comic-papers way."

"In a real way that had to do with birth and breeding and courtesy and his dead wife and all that. And she was going to her home in Vienna for a long stay. He said we would just be happy until she had gone, and then go home. That is the way he used to say it—'Go home.' He said over and over, 'We will never be as happy when

every one knows. There will never be a dream-time like this!' You don't understand, do you, Marian?"

"Not much of it. But then, I am not in love with him, you see."

"And I was. *Was*, Marian. Was in love—believed. It was heaven! Well, I'm paying."

She was silent. Marian rocked slowly, smoothed her silk-clad, elevated ankle, and waited.

"Then—the baby was coming. The mother's departure was delayed. I don't understand, as I think of it now, why I cared so little. I had absolute faith in him. We were just happy. He spent a part of every week with me. We lived, both of us, just for those days. Then, he did not come."

Marian rocked silently. The story, to a practical mind, was reminiscent of a million others.

"Then—he did not come. No use trying to tell you how I felt about it. There are no words to tell it with. I wrote. I waited. No answers came. He knew how soon my baby was to come. It was impossible that he should stay away long. If he had been taken away by business—death—anything, he might have missed my letters. But that would not prevent him from writing. Still, I might miss *his* letters. Incredible, perhaps, but it was the only thing that kept me from going mad. Only by belief in the impossible, did I hold myself. But no business—no anything, would keep him away from me on the day fast coming. I knew that. My little maid was so troubled. She abused the postman and told me they were all shiftless, that they constantly lost letters. She stood by me on the day that—I needed some one. For he did not come. There was no word."

"All nonsense," said Marian Bates. "How foolish you were! There were plenty of ways to find out where he was."

"But I was alone, with just the serv-

ants. I did not know how. I thought every moment would bring him. Of course, he might be ill, but would some one not let me know? Bianca had a cousin in Naples. The cousin knew the casa Sabelli—nothing had happened there; Signor Sabelli was at home, as far as she could find out. No use, Marian, going on, with the way I felt."

"No. No use," acquiesced the other.

"Two weeks—three—four—and the baby looked at me with his eyes. Then I went to Naples. Fancy it! Took my baby, as a street girl might have done, and went to his home. Can you believe that I would do that? One does unbelievable things sometimes. I wanted him. I was not ready to believe that it was his fault. There was some reason I was sure, and belief in that had kept me alive and sane. Bianca cried because I would go. She stayed downtown with the child and I went up alone to the house which I had not before seen. Walked—like a slave girl. I cannot believe that I would do that thing, but I did.

"I climbed long stone steps. I was weak, faint, but I climbed them. There was a little boy on the steps; it was Tito—like him—oh, yes, like him—and I asked him in Italian—about all I knew of it—for his father. He said, yes, that he was there.

"He was there—*there*—and I with my baby!

"Tito's nurse came then and took hold of him. I asked again, to make sure, to be sure that the child knew. I must be sure! I asked again.

"Yes, Signor Sabelli is home, but he has gone to drive. No name?"

"No. No name! Forever and ever, as long as I lived—no name! Gone for a drive! He at home, eating, sleeping, living—gone for a drive!"

She was not crying, but her face worked oddly and was lined and taut and old. But she was calm enough.

"So you just came away?"

"Well, yes. Can you think of anything else I could have done?" She laughed as she said it, but it was not a pleasant laugh.

"No, I can't. Did you leave any address, in case he should want it?"

"Do you think I did?"

"No. I think you did not."

"No one knows. I left no clew in case—as you said."

"Queer way for him to act," speculated Marian. "Can you think of any reason?"

"None—except that he is a man."

"Oh, well, maybe that is good and maybe it isn't. I wouldn't take any plane against men in general. You have disappeared for good, I take it. But what about the little girl on the bed there—is it fair to her to disappear like this?"

"She will have to bear it as I am trying to learn to do."

"You have your marriage certificate?"

"Yes."

"Take care of it. Now, Alice, buck up! What are you going to do?"

"What can I do?"

"Get busy at something. I'll stake you if you run out of money. Together we will take care of her; it will be a treat to me. I've always wanted a baby, and now I get one without any annoyance. Pick out a good, respectable name to call yourself, and go and see the professor."

Then Alice told her of the meeting on the train with Gerard Carlton, and of the possibility that he might find a small engagement for her.

The idea pleased Marian exceedingly.

"Men are useful to have on the string," said she. "Now, rest up. Spend some of your money for clothes; there is nothing like looking prosperous. Then write, Mr. What's-his-name, and start living. There's plenty in life yet!"

Alice glanced at the bed.

"With her?"

"By all means, with her. That's where we are going to get our fun. Believe me, my dear, she'll be good for us both!"

She put her big arm around Alice lumberingly, and her kiss was heavy and damp. And for the first time Alice Fey slept that night as she had in the past.

Then she wrote a letter to Gerard Carlton.

CHAPTER IV.

An occasional excursion into consciousness and then, week after week, Cesare Sabelli lay in his room where the shades were lowered and where Maddelena was his constant attendant, while his fever gained and slackened. As it gained, it brought with it fantastic things which, when it ebbed, he could not understand. Were they memories or were they dreams? He could not tell, for, as the fever went, so also went strength, and he lay in a maze which floated and carried him with it through heights and depths.

Even when the fever burned itself away, he lay quietly dozing, hardly waking to wonder—a breathing man who had no past and no future, but only an all-enveloping present of deep sleep.

When, by faint gradations, he began to understand and to recognize his room and Maddelena, it was long before he gripped anything else. Always, from the first of consciousness, there was an uneasy half-recollection of something which should be attended to and which had to do with some one outside of the dark room.

Those were days when the physician was appealed to for sleeping potions and when tales were told to him of restless nights. So Cesare was made to sleep deeply and coma swathed everything.

But youth is a bustling thing; it prods dulled minds and bodies; it is always

there to see that its rights are not overlooked; it laughs at medicants, it scorns weaknesses; it is ever-present. And it had its way with Cesare Sabelli, although it worked hard and persistently to win that way.

It had its first real chance when the physician looked with drawn brows at Maddelena one day.

"We will give him nothing more," he said curtly. He did not suspect anything; he was just annoyed by her as the medium through which his remedies had behaved badly. "Nothing more of any kind," he said. "Pull up the shades, let in the sunlight; see to his food. I will be here to-morrow at this hour. Have his food here and I will see that he takes it."

Maddelena was impassive; she did not, by the lifting of an eyelash, show that his words were unusual.

The doctor came at noon the next day and under his eyes Cesare took such nutriment as had been ordered. There was just one side glance at the doctor from under Maddelena's heavy lids—so rapid and stealthy a glance that he did not see it.

A pale color was rising into Cesare's face. He smiled faintly at Doctor Sagi.

"I have been—woolgathering. It seems a long time. How long is it?"

"About two months."

Then his patient grasped the edge of the bed and made an effort to rise; there was a gleam in his eyes which might have been dementia, except for the fact that the forehead was drawn into the stress and perplexity of reason.

"Two months!" he said. "Good God! The letters, Maddelena! My letters, quick."

"Better not get too busy," said Doctor Sagi, smiling to see life thus appear. Cesare took the letters which Maddelena brought, and ran through them fumblingly.

"The others. Where are they?"

"There are no others, signor."

"There are. Bring them."

The Italian woman shook her head and stepped back. The doctor interfered.

"Look here, Sabelli. You have made a sudden spurt into life, but look out! What is it you want? Don't set up another fever."

"I want letters which I know have come. Two months! Good God!"

Then he asked for the countess. She came at once and touched Cesare's hand.

"My dear boy, you are yourself again! Such anxiety as we have suffered!"

He held her with his eyes. He remembered what he had told the countess on that day, two months ago. It was what had happened during those two months that he must know.

"Contessa, you have some letters which you did not trust to Maddelena. Bring them, please."

Lines about the countess' mouth became deeper.

"There are no letters, Cesare, except those Maddelena has given you."

"There are others. There *must* be others."

"No. No others."

He looked steadily at his mother-in-law. Already the room was swinging for him; her white pompadour across the foot of the bed bobbed giddily. He set his jaw; he had let weakness dominate long enough. Two months—and no word! And he had sent no word! What was the condition down there on the wonder-road? What was she thinking—the girl there, who was so intolerant, who must have faced alone the day for which he had been slow in preparing.

He shook his head slightly, to settle the whirling room.

"Doctor Sagi, will you kindly tell me for what I am bandaged? I have no recollection of an accident."

He saw Maddelena watching them; he saw the countess' calm, cold face unmoved. Doctor Sagi spoke briskly: "A stray shot found you, Sabelli. A lot of complications hindered your recovery. The shot itself was not so serious."

"Who fired the shot?"

The countess spoke, her voice striking over some words which Doctor Sagi had commenced.

"We have made no investigation, Cesare. We thought it not advisable to make the matter public."

"Why not?"

"We had no evidence against—any one. You would recover as well without investigation, and we decided that perhaps you would prefer it."

"Why should I prefer it?"

"I have the idea, Sabelli," said Doctor Sagi casually, "that it may have been, as I said, a stray shot—some of the men after birds or small game, and too frightened by their carelessness to come forward with a confession."

Cesare looked at him. The doctor was more or less honest. He looked back at the countess.

"Was that your understanding, contessa—that it may have been a stray and chance shot?"

"I have accepted Doctor Sagi's suggestion," she replied.

"With all respect to Doctor Sagi, I shall *not* accept it."

"Investigate to your heart's content," said the doctor, and laughed. "But first get out of the woods yourself. We will talk no more about it to-day. Lie quietly and make your plans, Sabelli."

Cesare watched them as they crossed the room and stood in the light from the window there.

What was it all? Putting aside for a moment the all-absorbing fact that two months had passed—from where came the shot, and why? Who was interested in an act of that kind? He did not for an instant accept the doctor's sug-

gestion of a stray bullet. But who was interested in injuring him? Of course, the countess was the first to cross his mind, but it was impossible to suspect her. She had left him in such anger as he had never seen, but she would not do that thing. She would not dare. No matter how angry, she would not dare. He looked at her across the room. Her flat and haughty back was toward him. No matter what the provocation, she would not have dared to take the chance of killing him. He offered a mental apology to Consuelo for thinking that her mother could have been guilty of such an act. If not the countess, then who was it who had fired the shot? Stray? A chance bullet?

But that was not the question, after all. The question was, how to get as quickly as possible to that little stone house which stood on the edge of the cliff there at Ravello. What did she think? What *could* she think? A letter was a cold, pale thing, if he could write one—and his right hand had no life. He spoke sharply.

"Maddelena!"

The Italian woman crossed at once to him; the two by the window turned to hear. Well, let them hear—there was no longer anything to conceal. There should never have been anything concealed! The whole wretched condition was his own cowardly fault.

"Maddelena, you know how to get to Ravello?"

"I—I cannot tell, signor."

"You lived down that way. You know the quickest route?"

"Si, signor. I think."

"Then tell Matteo to get the motor at once and go to Ravello. You go there to Villa Capriso—any one will show you—and tell the lady who lives there just what has happened here."

The countess crossed swiftly to the foot of the bed. Doctor Sagi, scenting a family discussion, picked up his hat and departed.

"Cesare," said the countess. "Maddelena——"

"She is under my direction, *contessa*," said her son-in-law curtly.

He looked at Maddelena.

"Tell the lady at Villa Capriso everything. And go at once. Make the trip as soon as you can."

Then he asked for more food, and to have the windows wider open, and set himself to wait.

Maddelena could reach there late at night; she could see Alice in the morning and could return by afternoon. He supposed he could wait; strength was given always when it was needed.

He had not sent word to have Alice come; it was enough that she should know. And in a few days he could go. He closed his eyes. Beyond that meeting he could not see. But maybe she would come, even if he had not sent for her! His heartbeats quickened. And that other little expected life—he could not conceive of that! But he set his teeth hard, to wait as calmly as possible.

He spoke only in answer to questions during the day, but from hour to hour, his fear grew. Despite his effort at control, there grew, first a thought, then a doubt, then a wonder and a worry, and it all flooded into fear, plain, straight fear, like nothing he had ever known.

He knew when it was time for the woman's return. He heard her step on the stair; he knew when she stood by him. He did not open his eyes. He said, "Well," in a strange voice which was loud and rough, and he knew, before ~~she~~ spoke, what she would say.

"She has gone away, signor, and they do not know where."

He did not answer and he did not open his eyes.

It was then that Tito came into the room. The foot of the bed was exactly high enough for a chin rest, and the youngster used it as such, and surveyed his father silently over it.

Then, after some quiet moments, he kicked the edge of the bed slightly, nudgingly. He was tired of a father who only lay and did not look. His father had been a great deal of a good fellow in the past.

Cesare opened his eyes and saw the round face over the footboard. Tito's thick fringe of hair topped a very eager pair of eyes, and an instant broad smile of welcome met the gaze of the sick man. The world, then, had Tito in it—it was not all just the blur of agony that it seemed. Cesare had been thinking hard. Strength was the first thing he must have; strength to search and to find. Getting strength meant food and air, and it might mean the divertingness of his small boy there. Then, too, he had a pinch of pain in a new spot, which in itself was a relief. To think that this little boy of Consuelo's had not had a fair chance at his father's interest!

He answered the smile at once and moved an inviting hand. Tito sidled immediately, but furtively around the bed and stood beside it.

He spoke at once, this not-long-to-be-daunted Tito. In his careful English he said:

"When will you get up?"

"Do you want me to get up?"

"Yes. There are five new wabbits."

"Really! And what have you been doing, fellow, all the time father has been sick?"

"Oh, playing."

"With whom?"

"Not with *grand'mère*. She is cross all the time, and Mad'lèna's cross. But down the stairs, father, there is a little—she is a girl, father. Should I play with girls?"

"Why not, if you like her?"

"*Gran'mère* says she is not nice because her father cuts twees and dwags them. Would that make her not nice, father—because he dwags twees?"

"No. How old is she, son?"

"She is old. As old as me."

"And you play with her?"

"When I can fool *grand'mère*. I always fool *grand'mère* when I can, father."

"Then perhaps the little girl is nicer than you. You should not try to fool *grand'mère*."

"Oh, we must! That is the way to get along with her."

"Who told you that?"

"Nobody. I have just looked."

Cesare thought it as well not to follow up the subject.

"Tell me what you have been doing. You stay here with me, Tito, and talk to me."

"I do not like to stay in the house, but I like to stay with you, of course," he finished graciously.

"Very soon we can go out together. But you stay now, son. You stay. Tell me what you have been doing."

"It was me found you on the grass, father, when there was blood on your neck."

"You found me!"

"Yes, and I scweemed and scweemed till Mad'lèna came."

"Was there any one else?"

"No. Just Mad'lèna and me was there."

"And you have remembered all this time, son?"

"Why, yes. Of course. To fin' you with blood that way, I would remember. It had not ever happened."

"Of course you would remember that! Tito—has anything else happened that was strange, too, and that you have remembered?"

"No—no—excep' the wabbits. They was there all of a sudden an' I was s'prised."

"But nothing else?" Think, son: You have not seen any strange people—asking for father, or with letters?"

"Niccolo bwings the letters, father."

"Yes, but any one else with word for me?"

"There was a boy one day—he had white little pigs in a basket, but he ran away when *grand'mère* spoke to him."

"And did you know him?"

"No."

"Then he did not live near, for you know everyone who lives near here, don't you, Tito?"

"Oh, of course, because I go down the steps all the time to find people. I ask them to come up—but they never come, father. Nobody ever comes to play with me. They are afraid. I have to play alone always, unless I go down the steps. But now you are well, it will be different."

"Yes. But you would know if any one had been here, Tito. You always know when people come, don't you, my son?"

"I watch all people who come unless I am very busy. But there was a lady once, father—"

"A lady!"

"Not a girl to play with. Just a lady, and she was cross, too, and she spoke to me and Mad'lina, and then went away."

"What did she say to you?"

Tito considered.

"She asked was you here. An' Mad'lina came an' jerked me and she asked Mad'lina was you here. Then she just went away. Father, I wish you would have Mad'lina not jerk me."

The blood was a hot tide through Cesare's veins.

"Tito—son—think. What did the lady look like? Can you tell me?"



"Dreams are true stuff, after all, Laurie. It was fine of you to wait and let us name her together."

"Oh, she was just a lady. Like them all."

"Was she—do you know, Tito—was she Italian? Could she have been American—would you know if she were that?"

"Oh, yes, I know Americans. Matteo's wife is one. She is big and has red hair and such a loud voice. No, this lady was not American."

"Can't you think what she was like? Try!"

Tito shook his head.

"She was like them all."

"Was she—pretty, Tito?"

"Um-m-m—yes. Pretty. She had almost white shoes, father, buttoned very high up—not like any I ever saw."

Straightaway there pictured itself before the sick man a wide closet which

opened from a room all pink and white, and in that closet there were rows of dainty shoes. He had laughed through the purchase and fitting of some of them. They were unlike any that Tito had ever seen!

Had she been there? Had she come there to ask for him? He could feel how it would hurt her. Maddelena had seen her. She could describe—Then, as he turned his head, he saw a dark shape slip behind the curtains at the far end of the room. Just a sliding, dark shape which passed as he saw it. So he did not call Maddelena, and he did not ask her any questions. She had listened to his talk with Tito. All right enough—but why slip into the dark of the window corner?

He looked at her curiously a little later when she came. Tito had sprawled out upon the bed beside him and Cesare held rather tightly to the pliant, moist little hand which had so much friendship in its clutch. He was sure of Tito in that house, but was he sure of any one else?

CHAPTER V.

August, 1914. Alice turned from her window in the Hotel Michel and caught at Marian Bates as she came in.

"What are we going to do? Is there a chance to get away?"

"Mr. Carlton is seeing to it. He thinks he will get passage for us all. Some friends of his had reservations and they will give up to us, since we are women, and wait for a later boat. Yes, I think we will get off."

She flashed a proprietary glance over the bassinette whose occupant was slumbering as quietly as if the world were not suddenly all agog. Marian walked to the window, looked out and then away, pacing the room with long strides, her hands clasped behind her.

"How I wish I were a man, Alice! Then I could stay and see and do. But

I would wish to be a Frenchman. Have you noticed them to-day, the way in which they have changed. They know what they are up against; they have not forgotten what war means. They are going to play this game because they must, but they are not eager about it. They'll do it—don't doubt that they'll do it, but there are to be no heroics. Its plain, stern business. Heavens! How I wish I were a Frenchman instead of a woman, to be stowed away and sent back to America, where the war will be nothing but food for the first page of the papers."

"When do we get away, Marian? What shall I do?"

"Pack."

"I have packed—your things and mine. Will Mrs. Carlton let us know?"

"Be very sure that he will." She turned and gave Alice a slight smile.

"What you have done to that man, my dear, is a plenty. He will move when you speak, you may be sure."

Alice flushed.

"Oh, I don't think so."

"Don't try to humbug me. I am a woman, too."

"I am not trying to," said the other girl stiffly. "He has been kind and has liked my voice."

Marian laughed.

"Don't. I can't joke yet, Marian. Come—look."

They stood together at the window. Down the curving narrow street which ended in the Champs Elysées, came a long line of men in uniform; feet marching to their own sound. The men had stern faces, and their eyes were to the front—forgetful already of all except that France was threatened. A line of cabs, crowded with luggage and overflowing with tourists en route to the stations, were drawn to the curb, and halted until the small, stern squad had passed.

Marian circled the waist of the other girl with one of her strong arms. In

the two months since Alice had brought her baby to Paris, the friendship had grown between the girls. It was Marian who had taken the initiative, Marian who had established the footing of Alice and the child at the hotel, who had given her no time to think, but had sent her straightaway to the professor and launched her upon a course of lessons. It was Marian who had made Gerard Carlton welcome when he came in answer to the note from Alice. It was Marian who had directed the trial of the voice before him.

Gerard liked the voice; it was true and mellow. He did not believe it would make her famous, but useful, and he could give her a trial with the opening of the fall season in America. He expected to return about September first, and Alice and Marian had had long and serious talks as to what the plan must be. Marian advocated that Alice should go to New York, take the position which Gerard would offer, and establish herself definitely. Meantime, Marian would continue her lessons in Paris and keep the baby with her.

"Oh, let me!" she cried, when Alice exclaimed at the suggestion. "Believe me, my dear, I never loved anything before! And I have just wound this little thing into my heart until I am all of a tangle with it. Trouble? I'll nurse her out during the day, and then, when I come home, I'll get her into my arms and cuddle her and— She smiles at me already. Why, I wouldn't give a hug of her for all that gayest Paris has to offer!"

"Oh, I can't let you!"

"Can't let me be happy?"

"Can't turn her over to any one."

"Why not? Because you love her too much? I believe that I love her better than you do."

Alice faced her friend.

"I believe you do," she said, almost under her breath. "To you, she is just herself, to me she is part of something

else, of a thing that makes me want to almost kill! Part of a bitterness that will live as long as I do. I cannot look at her without thinking of the man who left me there—abandoned me! Marian, why do you suppose he did it?" It was the first time she had appealed for a reason; the second time she had spoken of Cesare Sabelli and her life with him. "Why do you suppose he did it?" she repeated.

"Do you want me to find out?" asked Marian.

"Find out?"

"Yes. I am not afraid of men. I wouldn't mind at all going and finding out what he meant by it—if it would make you happier and give little sweetness there her right chance at life. I wouldn't at all mind telling one Italian nobleman what I thought of him!"

"Never, never! Do you suppose I would let him think I had sent a messenger! Promise me that you never will!"

"Oh, I promise. As you like, of course. But if you want it done at any time, just let me know."

Alice shook her head.

"Let's not speak of him," she said.

"It makes me feel as if I should—kill."

And they did not speak of him, when it was finally settled that the baby should stay for a time with Marian, until its mother had her feet firmly fixed on professional ground.

Then August, 1914, came.

It was entirely due to the efforts of Gerard Carlton that the two girls and the child were able to make their way through the crowds which thronged the Paris station and to find space to hold them during the journey to the coast. The Americans rushing home took the war with individual emotions. Gerard spoke of it thus:

"Is there any feeling in the world that does not show right in front of us?" he said to Alice. They were crowded together in a corner of the

railway carriage. Marian had the baby, who was blinking interestedly from a new and very perky bonnet which her adoring slave had bought for the journey. "She shall go in festal array," Marian had said, "although the rest of us be war swept."

"I don't see much fear, do you?" Gerard went on. "Some of us are vexed that our Continental tours are interrupted, and all of us are mad about accommodations, but beyond that, we don't get the war, do we? It's more vital that the shopping was not finished and that it will be next to impossible to get decent seats at table on board."

Alice was not listening. She was thinking how fast she was speeding away from the world which she had made for herself. On the other side of the ocean she would be entirely lost. She wanted to be lost, of course, but now it would be definite. There was no chance ever again, as long as she should live, of finding that old life again. In Paris, anything might happen. Any day she might have met him.

If it were possible that there was a reason—but it was not possible, of course—he would have known where to search. All music centers. But across the ocean—it was the end. There was a sick thrill in that. There would be nothing to remind her but the young person in the perky bonnet, who was showing distinct signs of flirting with Gerard, and who was replying to his proffered finger by a cuddle back of Marian's ear, from where she deigned to laugh aloud, her latest and most wonderful accomplishment.

"This is our second journey together, little lady," Gerard was saying. "And you are acting so much better that I hardly know you."

That night, Gerard turned swiftly from the rail to meet Marian, when she made her way across the crowded deck.

"How are you fixed in your cabin?" he asked.

"There is an odor there, like unto nothing I have ever known! We can't decide whether it is cooking, lack of ventilation, disinfectants, too many people, or chemical experiments somewhere. We think it is a combination."

"Isn't she coming out?"

His interruption sent up Marian's eyebrows.

"She? Oh, was that what you wanted to know? No, she is not coming out. At least, she says she is not. I told her she would be asphyxiated before morning, but she didn't answer. No, Mr. Carlton, she is not coming out. I'm sorry."

He laughed as he met her smile.

"Well, she is attractive!" he said admittingly.

"She's fine! I am almost glad to have been made to go back on our plans, so that I shall be on the same continent and keep that dear youngster for her."

"But where is the sister?"

"The sister will not interfere. We have neither of us, Mr. Carlton, any relatives who are either close or satisfactory."

Gerard looked at her, suddenly sobered. Was the story which he felt was back of appearances—was it the old story? He could not believe that it was, but he forgot Marian standing there beside him, because there ran a new warm flame through his heart, and in that flame was the sudden knowledge that he did not care what the story might be. He looked at Marian vaguely when she spoke; he answered briefly and did not notice when she moved away through the crowd.

She went a little blindly herself, with her fingers twisting together in her coat pockets. She went alone in the pushing crowd to stare out over the rail at the bow and face a new thing, too, as Gerard, on the other side of the boat was facing one.

In New York, the final plans were

made. Alice sang before the head of the opera company, and was engaged for a small part in a tour to the Pacific slope. The plans were made speedily, and she was to leave at once to join the company in the West.

Gerard Carlton went with her back to her boarding place, after the matter was closed.

"You have stepped right into it," he said, smiling down at her. "Odd how things work out! I hope you are going to be happy."

"Happy! Oh, that!" said Alice, who was a little rosy and bright-eyed from the interview. "That doesn't matter. But it gives me a chance to take care of myself. I am wonderfully lucky! But I have you to thank for it."

"No, you have the baby. If she hadn't cried at top speed on the train that day, I would not have known you."

She did not answer. She did not often talk about the baby.

"I am going to join the company after it has been tried out," he said, waiting a moment for the reply he did not get. "I will see you in about two months. I—hope—" He stopped. It was hard to say what he wanted to, because she was watching the pavement and her pretty new color had quite gone. "I hope you will be glad to see me."

"Oh, very! And, in the meantime, you will drop in and see how Marian gets on."

"Afraid not. I'm off for the South to-day. I will hardly be back in New York before I see you. But they will be all right."

"Oh, yes, indeed. Marian knows how to do everything."

They parted at the door and Alice went up the two flights of stairs to the room Marian was settling vigorously.

"I don't believe you will like it here, Marian. There is that funny odor of the unwashed in the lower hall. The stairs are not any too clean. It's board-

ing-house. I don't believe you'll like it."

"Then I'll move again," said Marian cheerfully. "But here is a sunny corner for Love's crib, and sunshine in a big city is worth a lot. The man is too shifty-eyed really to please my taste and the woman is a bit creepy. But, never mind us, Alice. I am quite capable of looking after baby and myself while you are gone."

She said it again the next day, when she piloted Alice through the jam of traffic at the station entrance. They had left the baby sleeping in the sunshine. Marian bought the ticket, made Alice comfortable in the car, and then kissed her firmly.

"Don't worry a minute, Alice. And don't expect too many letters. No news will be good news from me. I hate to write letters, but you know I am on the job. You have only to sing and try to enjoy life. At this end of the line we are all right, don't forget that. I will hurry along now, for fear Love should wake."

When the train had moved out and she had waved a hearty good-by, Marian went out into the crowded street.

"It's up to me," said she nearly aloud. "It's up to me not to be silly! I have never turned my head to look after any man and I won't begin now. I don't need a man's love to make me happy—I'm not that kind—not the trailing-vine kind of woman, and I won't let myself care if I never see him again! I don't care. I know I don't. I just looked for a minute into forbidden worlds. I have my work cut out for me!"

Looking ahead at that work, she plunged into the throng at the street intersection. Motor horns were tooting; there was a clang and clamor of fire apparatus; cars backed and ground together. In the midst Marian confusedly stepped forward—stepped

back. Some one screamed, whistles sounded. Through the pack of people the police made their way.

It was long before they could get her from under the wheels where she was so tightly wedged, and her arms fell limp, with trailing fingers, when they lifted her.

"No use," said the officer at her head. "But rush her to the hospital, anyhow."

And in her crib where the sunshine had been, the baby flung its arms and wailed.

CHAPTER VI.

The Hutchinsons, man and wife, eating their supper by the aid of the smallest electric lamp known to the trade, conveyed to each other that the persistent crying of the baby was annoying.

"I expect as the Joneses won't stand for it, when they come in," said Mrs. Hutchinson. "They happens to be out, or we'd a heard from them afore this. It was your fault, Alex, that we took a kid in the house, anyhow. I said from the first there wasn't nothin' to it. Better a let the rooms stand empty a week or so as have the whole house upset!"

"Ye don't pay bills with empty rooms," responded Mr. Hutchinson. "They said as how the child was good-natured. Wonder if by any chance they ain't either o' them there."

"At this hour? It's nine o'clock. They went out early. Don't they know a baby's gotta be fed?"

"Then you tell what's the matter," he returned shortly. "All I gotta say is they'd better cut that noise out afore the Joneses gets in!"

Food was consumed silently for a time, and the wails ceased. Then they began again, with a new, strange, gasping sound.

"Ye don't suppose as they're abusin' of it? We don't know them folks, Alex, though ye was so stuck on their

looks. I'm goin' to make a excuse an' go up an' see."

She got up as quickly as her bulk allowed.

"I'll go up t' the hall an' listen to what they're doin'," she suggested. "From the Jones' bathroom I can hear every word the new folks says."

Mr. Hutchinson nodded and, with the view of possible entertainment, followed his wife upstairs. But from the bathroom of the Joneses there was nothing to be heard of the new people but the cries of the child, and they were shorn of temper; they were sobbing, heart-hurt murmurs.

"Pore thing!" said the woman, backing out of the bathroom. "I don't believe they're there. I'll go see, Alex. They ain't no harm in that."

She knocked at the door of the new people's room, then pushed it open and went in. The room was dark but for the street lamp which had flung a stream of light across the floor. The woman put on the lights and the baby stopped crying and blinked.

Then Mr. Hutchinson, lingering on guard at the foot of the stairs, heard his wife call him, and he hastened up.

She had taken up the child and stood holding it and looking about the room.

"My Gawd, Alex!" she said in a hushed voice. "My Gawd! I believe they've stuck it on us. Look! The big trunk's gone. They went out along about two o'clock. Nobody who intended to come back to a little baby like this would leave it so long. It's past nine o'clock. They've stuck it on us an' gone!"

"Aw, it can't be!" protested her husband. "Look at the fixin's there," pointing to the dressing table, where silver-backed trinkets lay. "Aw, it can't be, Emma! Yer allers lookin' for th' worst. Somethin' must a happened to keep 'em. Can't ye feed it and get it asleep? There's its bottles and things."

Mrs. Hutchinson could. She did it darkly, but none the less gently, and returned the baby to her crib.

Then the couple went to the first floor and sat back of the stairs to wait. The Joneses came in. After the theater hour other dwellers in the house came. No one else put a key in the latch.

That night, Mrs. Hutchinson slept in the room with the baby. In the morning she fed it and then faced her husband sternly.

"Ye see! They've gone and left it on us. An' your fault, Alex. It was you urged takin' them because the women was good-lookin'! That's what we get for yer fallin' for women all the time! A baby saddled on us!"

"They must a somethin' happened," he persisted. "They wouldn't a left all them things. Something's happened. We'll wait an' see."

And during the day they waited and fed the child. Mrs. Hutchinson even awkwardly essayed a change of clothes and a bath for it.

"Nice little thing!" said Mr. Hutchinson, standing by.

Mrs. Hutchinson stared.

"You're not considerin' adoptin' it, I s'pose. If ye are, ye'll take care o' it. I got more'n I can do a'ready."

The couple, as the day progressed, looked about the room. They examined the litter of trifles on the dressing table; they looked at Marian's lingerie in the boxes; they inspected some gowns she had hung in the closet. They agreed that she would hardly have left such good things if she had intended to stay away. Still, as Mrs. Hutchinson suggested, "We don't know what they tuk. Mebbe these things are nothin' to folks who has to get rid of a child this way."

They waited until the next day; until the second day. The baby was the only satisfied member of the trio. She took her food, was agreeable, and responded pleasantly to Mr. Hutchinson's heavy efforts at playfulness.

But there came a time when they must act.

"They've wished it on us, sure enough!" he finally agreed. "Now, Emma, we don't want t'abuse nothin', but we can't take a kid like this t'raise."

"I said that at first," replied his wife stiffly. "'N' I've had the brunt of it. Now, you say what's t' be done."

"We might take it to the perlice."

"An' have it in the papers and coppers all over the place an' scarin' the rest o' the folks away? Think again, Alex."

He thought again and for several days longer they continued to play foster parents to the baby and allow it to occupy one of their best-paying suites.

Then Mrs. Hutchinson declared the proper move.

"We can't lose no more money a waitin' on this room. We'll pack their things, Alex, and save 'em 'til we sees if they comes back. An' for the baby—we'll take it over to the Foundlin's Home there and get them to take it."

"We'll have to tell 'em where we got it. They're awful perticular over there."

"Well, there's no harm tellin' what we know. An' if yer good-lookin' women," with a sniff, "come back, we'll know where it is an' no harm done. But we can't go on nursemaidin' this way, any longer."

So it was agreed, and that evening, after the residents of the house had gone for their evening's entertainment, the woman packed together the baby's clothes and, with her husband carrying the child, they set out for the Foundlings' Home not far away.

They rang the bell and were admitted.

"I'd like to see the superintendent," said Mrs. Hutchinson boldly.

They were shown into the bare office, where there was a broad desk, a swinging chair, and a line of other chairs.

The matron came in. She smiled at the visitors, but her eyes were keen and sought deep.

"I am Mrs. Hinton. What is it about the child?"

She was a tall woman, whose plain gray bodice was crossed with a white kerchief, held by a little cameo pin. Her gray hair was soft and prettily done; her hands were the beautiful mother hands, quite out of pictures of madonnas—hands with tapering, lithe fingers and palms soft and slender.

Mr. and Mrs. Hutchinson did not see these things in detail, but they saw that Mrs. Hinton was, as they put it later, "business to the backbone." They saw the keenness of her glance, if they did not see the tenderness back of it. They realized that she would ask such questions as she chose and that she was quite used to this situation which had new terrors for them. Mrs. Hutchinson unwrapped the baby with trembling hands.

"We would like, if you please, to leave this child here, until its folks come for it."

"Where did you get it?" asked the matron.

The question was gentle enough, but it was going to require an answer and a very exact one. Many more, perhaps!

Some one spoke from the hall.

"Just wait a moment," said the matron, and stepped out. They heard a door close.

The man and woman looked at each other. Where had she gone? They had visions of investigation, of police at the house, of business interfered with, of questions that maybe they could not answer to suit this calm, investigating lady, who knew her business so well and who was used to dealing with people who wanted to get rid of babies. What did they do with people who could not answer questions promptly?

Mr. Hutchinson grasped her arm.

"Let's get out quick," he whispered. "Let's leave it and get away. We can't have em' comin' around our house. Let's get out while we can."

There was no hesitancy. Mrs. Hutchinson put the child in a corner of an armchair and, with hardly a sound, the two slipped into the hall, noiselessly turned the knob, and fled down the steps.

"If the women come back for it, we know where it is," she panted, when they reached their own house. "We didn't do nothin' criminal, leavin' it that way. We has to perfect ourselves!"

CHAPTER VII.

Alice Fey walked blindly into the half-opened door. There was the dull thud of striking flesh and almost before she had raised her hand to her forehead, it had swollen. There was a trickle of blood on her fingers as she took them down.

Gerard Carlton was at her side instantly. He drew her within the room and pushed the door shut.

"How did you do that?" he cried anxiously. "My dear girl, what a bump! Didn't you see the edge there? How did you happen to do it? Wait! Let me see. That's a bad little cut. I don't see how you happened to do it!"

"Just because I do not pay attention," she answered, clasping her fingers over his. "Never mind. I do just such things all the time. I don't seem to pay attention to anything—and then I am—tired."

She was more than that, apparently, for she was very white. He sat beside her on the sagging sofa in the unpleasant parlor, and held tightly, too, to her fingers.

She loosed hers first.

"Never mind. There are worse things than a bumped head. I nearly cried, though, didn't I? Not so much the hurt as to find some one I knew—to

find that you would come so soon, when I asked you to."

"You knew I would come. What I want to know is, what have you meant by what you have done? Why did you leave the company that way? Why have you been quiet all this time? You must have known how anxious I was. Why have you done this?"

"I think you should ask me why I have sent for you now."

"Well, why?"

"To ask you for some money—to ask you to lend me some until I can earn it. You were the only person in the world I could ask and I—waited as long as I could."

"Do you mean——"

"I mean I could not wait any longer. There is nothing heroic about starving to death, Mr. Carlton, and then I have something to make me want to live—something I must do."

"I don't understand all this. Money, of course. You know that. It will be a great pleasure. But tell me. I was astounded when I joined the company in San Francisco, to find that you had left it. They could tell me only that you had given no reason and had told no one where you were going. I wrote you at once to the New York address, where we had left Miss Bates. The letter came back to me. As soon as I could get here, I went to the house and found new people there, and they knew nothing of any of you. There was nothing else for me to do. You don't know how delighted I was to have that note this morning asking me to come to you here. What has happened? Something, of course. Why didn't you let me know sooner? A pretty way to treat a friend!"

A little discoloration was already coming into the bruise on her forehead. He looked at her curiously. She was thinner, much thinner, and her eyes looked larger and darker. They had lost the Italian blue with which he had

credited them on the first day he had seen her. Her black gown lacked entirely the style which had been a part of her; the ruffles at its neck were frayed and not too fresh. He even noticed that her shoes were shabby. Nothing was at all like the girl he had first known, except the sheen in her hair—a sun ray found that sheen and displayed it to him across the dusty bareness of the parlor, in which lingered stolid odors of mixed foodstuffs, untouched by any out-of-doors.

She was looking at him, her chin drawn into creases.

"Mr. Carlton, Marian is dead."

"Dead!" He said it incredulously. The idea of death did not connect instantly with the vigorous, live personality of that great, gold-haired girl.

"Killed. I found it out at a hospital. The books showed the record. I read the description and all. You would have known at once it was Marian—she was not like every girl."

"And——" He did not know how to form his question.

"Yes—that's it—the baby is lost. I have searched everywhere. I have not been able to find a clew."

There were still no words that seemed fitting, so he only looked at her. Her eyes were very wide open. She leaned forward, rubbing the palms of her hands back and forth across her knees.

"Yes, that's it. That's what I have been trying to do—find my little girl. Can you imagine—— You can't, of course, but try and think what it is to have one's very own little girl—somewhere—anywhere—not to know where. Suppose you had been selfish and left a little girl of yours, and then, when you came back, she was just gone. That's worse than to be dead, Mr. Carlton—to be just gone. So that is what I have been doing, and that is why I have to have money. Because she may be any place—just think—any place! I thought

maybe you would be willing to lend me money."

There was not the faintest glint of moisture in her eyes; but he noticed how dull they were. Eagerness had been drained from them; dogged determination alone remained.

"You see—I began wrong. I denied to you that she was mine."

He got up and walked to the window and stared out through the dirty curtains and dingy panes, because a man does not like to feel twisted in the face and heart. He knows that emotions belong to women and must be kept where they belong. He had never had any trouble keeping his there and now—with that girl, whom a few weeks had struck so hard—

He turned suddenly.

"Look here! I must know all this. But first—I want you to know that I love you! Will you marry me and let me have the right to hunt with you?"

"Marry you! Oh! You thought I was not married?"

He knew she must see the answer in his face. She put her hand out.

"That was good of you. Oh, it was very good of you!"

"It is because I love you!"

Her hand clutched his arm, and then ran up to his shoulder and clung there.

"Do you mind?" she asked very low.

"Do you mind if I do this?"

"This," was to come close and put her face against his breast. He stood quietly and held her with one arm. She grew heavy against him and breathed slowly and evenly.

Some one went through the hall outside and there were scraping noises.

She lifted her head and stepped back.

"There," she said. "That has made me feel better—to hold tight to some one. Thank you for letting me."

"Shall we go out and get something good to eat?" He tried to say it normally and still make it fit in with what had been said in that room.

"Yes, but first I would rather tell you about it—if you want to know."

"I think I have proved that."

"Yes, when you asked me to marry you. And when you let me lean against you. You did not mind that, you're sure?"

"No, I did not mind it at all, Alice. But let us go out and have a good dinner first and then see what you want done. We will talk it all over and get at it reasonably. I don't believe you have been reasonable about it, have you, my dear?"

"No, no. Oh, no! I guess not. I have been frightened."

"Of course, and that's foolish. We will go at it sensibly together."

She went away and came back with an odd-looking little hat and a coat not half warm enough for the snow outside. He noticed her belongings sharply. He hoped he could be dexterous enough to make her take from him what she needed. Somehow, the knowledge that she had a husband did not bear upon him as heavily as it should upon a man in love. It was such a far-off husband, most intangible. He remembered the fury which he had seen in her in the past—fury which came from recollections of the man she had married—and he could not be made unhappy by a man who could put anger into her face as he had seen it. There had been none of her old fierceness and intolerance to-day; it seemed to have gone.

He knew where to take her, where it was quiet and restful, with no jazz bands; where the food was good and where they could sit long and talk.

"I am not starving." She smiled faintly. His heart jumped at her first smile. "I have a little money yet. I did not wait too long. I have tried to be reasonable."

"Yes, I am sure you have," he said protectingly, and then talked of other things until their dinner was over. Finally he said:

"Now tell me as calmly as you can—as if it were some one else, dear, if you can."

And she tried. She told him how, after she had joined the company, she had become uneasy because she did not hear from Marian; how she sent a telegram which was returned; how worry grew into fear until she could not bear it, and so made the journey back to New York; how the boarding house had changed and no one knew what had become of the other proprietors, nor of Marian and the child; how she began at once a round of hospitals, feeling sure an accident must have happened; how she found at last the record of an unknown woman killed on the streets—Marian, for she was shown the clothes. But no clew to the child. She had visited homes for children, associations in rescue work, but with no results. And money was nearly gone.

"So I wrote you. And you will lend me enough to keep me a little while?"

"You can go back to the company, I am sure, in some capacity. You want to do that, don't you?"

She shook her head.

"Oh, I could not do that. I could not leave the city. I must get work of some kind, and then, after hours I can be looking all the time."

"You can't do that. You can't look that way. It would not mean anything."

"Oh, it must!" she cried a little wildly. "Don't say it won't mean anything. It must! Some day I shall run across a clew, if I never stop trying—and I never shall, Mr. Carlton. Some day I'll see her somewhere, or hear of her. I will get something to do. I think I will clerk in a store."

"Do you know how?"

"Why, one doesn't have to know how. One just clerks."

"I think it takes experience. You don't know stenography? No, of course not. You can learn."

"No, that takes time and I have noth-

ing to live on while I learn. I can't take your money for that. No, I will try and get a position in a store. If I only had some idea what part of the city would be the most likely! But I will wait and hunt. I have not lost hope, Mr. Carlton. Surely, surely, I will not be punished much longer for my wickedness and selfishness! Surely, after a little while, I will have paid."

And he could not move that resolution. She counted very gingerly such bills as she accepted from him and folded them away in her purse.

"This will keep me three weeks, and in that time I will find something. Yes, I will let you know if I don't. I would rather you did not come to see me. No, I won't move to a better place until I get a little ahead. Yes, I'll meet you once in a while for dinner. I'd like to. Please, don't argue with me about my plans."

"But I want to say one thing."

"Yes?"

"That I love you and that if I never say it again, the love is there just the same. Will you remember that?"

"Do you want it that way?"

"If I love you, it gives me the right to help in every way. It gives me the right to ask to help. And it makes me happier to have you know it."

"Oh, and you like it?"

"Like what—to love you?"

She nodded.

"I must like it, must I not? There is no other way."

CHAPTER VIII.

There were six wide windows through which the morning sun lay in broad swaths across the room; there were six wide windows to the south; six wide windows to the west, and the sun followed them all day. From its earliest ray to its latest, it looked in upon the big room where the babies of the Foundlings' Home spent their days.

Along the windowless side of the room, there was a matted shelf with a white rail. There, at intervals, were the babies, sleeping under blue tufted quilts, sitting to wave their toys, growing comfortable and content in the warmth and care.



There were individual cradles and beds, too; there were small playgrounds fenced in for those big enough to explore; there were tiny rocking-chairs for those big enough to sit in them—and all flooded with the sun, wide and open and meant to bring happiness into small lives forgotten in the regular distribution of joy.

Mrs. Hinton, the matron, smiled at the visitor making the rounds with her.

"I am glad you think it pleasant. We try to treat every baby here as it would have been treated in its own home, if that home had been right."

The woman beside her caught her breath.

"Just think! How many have you?"

"Thirty-five now. That is not many for us."

"And—do you think there is one I can have?"

"We will see. How old did you say?"

"Four months."

The matron looked at the visitor. She had to look down to see her face, and it was eager and alert—anxious, too, and it was the anxiety that the matron was watching.

"You are particular about that age?"

Casper stepped back, but he looked interested. He listened with great care to the explanation Gardner made to him. "Yours, Casper. Touch her hand. Yours."

"Yes, yes. Oh, yes!"

The matron stood for a moment, considering. One of the babies gurgled and reached for her; she bent and raised it to a sitting position, where it clutched the white rail and showed two tiny teeth in appreciation, then it beat the rail softly.

"This baby is eight months. She is a dear. But she is too old?"

"Yes. Too old."

Again the matron's eyes were keen through their gentleness.

"I want you to see this one," she said. At the end of the long bed, a baby looked up at them. Instantly it took its hands back under the quilt, and dark eyes which had been wide and wondering took on a sudden look of—perhaps not fear—more, a not-understanding apprehension.

The matron touched the child and it grew tense under the covers. She spoke and it relaxed, but continued to peer out with very black eyes, sober and wide.

"This child is two years old. See how small she is. When she was brought to us a year ago by the police, her back was covered with welts which had broken through the skin. They were across her chest, too. In all that we have done for her, she has never forgotten; she has never smiled. What do you suppose they could have done to that baby to make her remember this way? She doesn't sit up and she doesn't play with toys. One day, not so long ago, she reacted for a ball I offered her. Her hand crept toward it, then she suddenly drew it back, and through her little nightgown her fingers felt for the welts across her chest. Then she covered her head and lay still. What could have been done to a baby to make it remember like that?"

Then the matron moved on, without waiting for the shocked reply.

"See this little girl," she said. "She

must be four or five months old. She was left here only a few days ago. Perfect condition. A man and woman brought her. I was called away as I was beginning to question them and they slipped out and left the child. She has been cared for. She was never a waif. We do not often have them like this."

"May I take her up?"

The matron watched the woman with the child. She was evidently not used to handling them; but her color spread instantly, warm and eager; her eyes misted. The matron knew the child-love when she saw it.

The visitor turned eagerly.

"May I have her?"

"We will talk about it," said the matron quietly.

And they talked about it in the stern office downstairs. The matron leaned forward, her face serious.

"This child is of good birth; it did not belong to the people who brought it here. We have no means of knowing how they came by it; it is not our business to go out and find where children come from; our business is to care for them when they are here. But it is our business to know where they are going when they are adopted. We must know why you want the child and all details concerning yourself. In return, we protect you against inquiry, unless there is some very good reason why we should not."

"Of course you want to know! I understand. My husband is Lieutenant Harry Gardner of the United States army. He has been on the Mexican border for a year. I—have been at our summer home in the mountains. Mr. Gardner will be there in a week. I want to have the baby with me at home when he comes. We have money and—we would love her very much." There was a sob in the last word. The matron was looking at her.

"You have lost a child." It was a statement, not a question.

Mrs. Gardner nodded.

"How long ago?"

"A—er—four months ago?"

"I see. You want the child here to take the place of the one you have just lost?"

Again the other woman nodded. Her fingers were bending each other back and forth in her lap.

The matron spoke,

"I can, of course, substantiate what you say about your ability to care for the child."

She stopped then and waited. When Laura Gardner looked up and met her straight gaze, her mouth trembled, but she lifted her head and spoke steadily.

"I can give you immediately all proof that we are proper persons to have her."

"Then what is the matter?"

The question came like a shot from lips which had set themselves uncompromisingly.

"What are you nervous about, Mrs. Gardner? Don't say you are not. I have been in this work for thirty years. I know. Be frank with me, if you want the child. You cannot have her if you are not."

"I—I do not understand."

The matron arose.

"I seem to know always when I am being told only part of the truth. When you are ready to give me your confidence, I shall be ready to talk about the child. Not before."

She crossed the room and opened the door. Laura Gardner sprang up.

"Oh, let me have her!" she cried. "I must have her. You needn't be afraid. I shall love her so much—we both will! You don't know. I must have her! I have searched every other place. Oh, let me have her! I beg of you. I must!"

She was shaking as she talked.

"And does your husband feel the same way about it?"

"Yes, yes. Oh, yes!"

"How do you know? He has not been here since your child died?"

"No—yes."

The matron put a hand on the other woman's shoulder, put her back into her chair, and sat before her.

"Is it possible that your husband does not know? That you want to substitute this child for your own?"

"Oh, what do you care?" And the voice was tight and thick with tears. "If you knew! He was crazy for the baby. He had built everything upon it. It came—it—it—never lived at all. I could not tell him! I could not——"

She stopped and the matron waited.

"I sent him word we were all right. And his telegrams—— I could not tell him the child had not lived! Yes—I have not told him and I will not. He will not know. He will love this baby—we both will. It is not necessary to tell him."

Mrs. Hinton touched her gently.

"No, no. That is beginning wrong. Tell him the truth."

"I can't. I can't. You should be sorry for me."

"I am sorry for you, but do the right thing. Tell him the truth and then you shall have the baby."

They sat silently for a long time. The buzzer on the desk rang and the matron arose.

"I must go. Think it over. I cannot let a child go into a home under false conditions."

Laura Gardner grasped her arm.

"Might I not keep the baby a while before I tell him? Let him learn to love her first and then tell? Won't you let him love it first?"

The matron shook her head.

"He must be told at once."

Laura Gardner dropped her outstretched hand, but in an instant she had whirled back.

"I promise. I promise anything. Only let me have her."

September had touched the earth with its colored pencils, and all the greenness of the mountain forests had turned to brilliancy. Then, too, September's sun mellowed the tartness of the fall days. All along the winding roads there was silence. Summer visitors had gone; only those who loved the mountains were staying to take the frostiness which bit sharply in the early mornings and at night.

The Gardner home stood on its winding driveway, halfway to the top of the mountain. It was a great, rambling, stone house, inside of which were spacious rooms with great fireplaces, where backlogs simmered all day and all night.

Lieutenant Harry Gardner had arrived the previous day. He stood in front of the big fireplace in the living room with an arm about his wife. He laughed.

"Dreams are true stuff, after all, Laurie. It was fine of you to wait and let us name her together. Laurie, the army makes a man appreciate home. You and the house here were enough for any man's happiness, and now the little girl—well, there's nothing left to wish for. Not often a fellow gets his life fixed just as he wants it!"

She leaned against him.

"Harry."

He looked down.

"Is that a worry in your voice, dear love?"

"N-n-no. But, as you say, there is so seldom perfect happiness. Now—suppose the baby had not lived—suppose we had just had to get along with other people's——"

"Why think of it?"

He could not see her face. If he had, he would have seen her lower lip caught tight between her teeth.

"But maybe we should think of it—

maybe we should. There was a woman, Harry—right near here. Her baby died and they were so distressed!"

"Are you trying to tell me something, Laurie?"

"No, no. Oh, no," in sharp anxiety.

"Then, why bring in some unhappy woman? You are not unhappy. Lordy! How lucky a man can be!"

"Yes," she said.

He sat down in front of the fire and pulled her to his knee. She turned her face away to look out into the forest, which was darkening fast and where a new wind was stirring the branches roughly. There was a letter to be written that night. A woman in a gray dress at a certain institution was waiting for it.

"I wanted to tell you about that woman, Harry."

He took her chin in his hand and turned her face toward him. He looked straight into her eyes; her lids did not drop. She looked too, hard and straight, and prayed in all confusion: "Let him know—let him not know! Make me tell him—make me not tell him! But she did not shrink from his gaze, which lasted long; she met it.

"Harry dear—that poor woman——"

He stooped and kissed her.

"Never mind about her, my dear. We will not talk about saddening things."

And that night, she wrote hysterically:

I did not tell him. I could not. I will not. If it is done, you will have to do it.

CHAPTER IX.

Lieutenant Harry Gardner had come up to his mountain home, not only to join his wife and his new daughter, but to tell something that cold pen and ink could not tell. After two days spent in the yellow sun, getting acquainted with life as it is to a man at home, he had not yet told, partly because of the

little flurry of confusion which he had caught in his wife's mood. It changed suddenly into something not unlike recklessness, but from that, into a confidence more familiar.

"People are not always so hard as they pretend to be, are they, Harry?" she asked. He speculated less upon her meaning than he would have done if his own proposition had not been so immensely large and confronting.

It was this: That he was to go at once to France, with the first representative group from the United States.

Lieutenant Gardner was glad of the chance. He recognized that it had been his enthusiasm, his long and hard work at the practical details of his department, that had brought him into notice. He had gone into the army with a knowledge of civil engineering, and he was now to apply that knowledge during his visit on the other side. He did not know what was in the heads of the authorities at Washington, any more than he knew what the warring countries were planning, but he did know that he was to go without heralding and was to be there as the storm of war spread and threatened.

He was to go at once and Laurie was to be told.

Casper, the collie, came around the corner of the house and looked at him as he sat on the broad stone step, waiting for Laurie to come out and "have her heart broken," as he put it to himself. The dog cocked his ears and put his head to one side. Then he came and lay with his chin across his master's shoes, gently fanning the great tassel of a tail and thus mentioning how glad he was to have the man of the house at home.

Casper was twelve years old and had made the best of his opportunities. He knew his own business perfectly. In the city, where he spent the winters, he knew it was the business of a big collie to make the best of the brick

square which was his out-of-doors, to conduct himself with dignity within the house, to walk as a gentleman would at the end of his leash when he went out. But, in the mountains, he was lord of the premises. From his vantage point on the flat, stone step at the top of the terrace, he surveyed the crescent of cleared ground walled about by tangled forest and edged on either side by brooks which were trickling rivulets one day and raging torrents with a night's rain.

From the flat stone on the terrace, Casper knew the moment any one turned in at the entrance gate a half mile away. He would sit up and wait for the visitor to come to a certain point in the drive, from which the house could be viewed. It was Casper's idea that the house was well worth looking at and that it was proper enough for strangers to come and see it, provided the toes of their shoes did not pass beyond a certain point. That point passed, Casper would arise and step down, and it was a brave man who did not halt.

If the visitor stepped back over the line which Casper had selected as the dead line of friendship, the collie would lie down on the grass at the point to which he had advanced in his charge and fix his eyes upon the eyes of the stranger. A movement forward brought a resumption of hostilities; a movement backward was received with autocratic silence.

As to what would happen if a visitor persisted in coming forward against the warning, it had never been demonstrated but once. Casper's head had sunk into his white fluffy collar, his body squared and crouching, his eyes red-rimmed; and Laura Gardner had flung herself across him with her arms about his neck, screaming:

"Go back! Go back! I can't hold him! Go back!"

That was Casper—the gentlest of the gentle, except upon occasion.

The collie had not known just what to do with the new member of the family who had arrived in the home of the two dearly beloved people. As a rule, he did not care for children; they were apt to make striking motions. Whether with straws or bludgeons would be quite the same to a collie who had never been struck, but who understood in a vague, primeval way, that such things were done. The little new arrival at the mountain house did not make striking motions, but it was of the variety of person who did, Casper considered, regarding it seriously as it blinked in the golden sun, when Laura Gardner came out on the step, too. Casper wrinkled his forehead into his equivalent for a frown, backed away, and sat erect, surveying aloofly.

"Casper, look here!" said Lieutenant Gardner, taking into his own one of the small hands and extending it. "Look here. Come!"

Casper came tentatively, and disdainfully advanced his nose.

"Be careful," said Laura. "He is queer about children, you know."

"He's all right. Casper, boy, here is some one for you to take care of. See?"

Gardner put the small hand upon the satiny-smooth brown head and the baby curled her fingers there and spread and stretched them. Casper stepped back, but he looked interested. He listened with great care to the explanation which Gardner made to him.

"Yours, Casper. Touch her hand. Yours."

Then Gardner turned to his wife.

"We shall call her Louise, shall we not, dear? So that her nickname may be 'Weesie?' You know that is what they called my mother. It was her child name and it stayed with her all her life. I remember how odd it seemed to me to hear her friends call her 'Weesie,' but when I grew up and she was frail for so many years, it was just fitting. I always knew that when I

had a daughter of my own, I should want her called that. So that is what she shall be, eh—Laurie?"

"Of course. I wanted you to name her."

"Give her to me. Come on, Casp, we'll take her for her first visit to the balsam thicket. Come on, old boy."

Casper followed, looking at the ground. He was not yet sure of this new thing in the mountains. It had a soft hand and a taking way of moving it about on one's head, but he was not quite ready yet for allegiance. So he followed at a distance.

Laura Gardner watched. Did Harry suspect anything at all? No, of course he did not. He could not, and yet he had looked very straight and been a little serious for a man just home. She clasped her hands together in her lap. She did not believe that the matron, down there in the city, would say anything. "She won't. She knows we should have the baby. I don't believe she will do anything, and I am going to chance it. It isn't wicked. It can't be wicked! Oh, but he would never forgive me, if he knew!"

Laura Gardner had shown in her defiance of the matron and of her own promise the desperation that a frail thing has when cornered. Through the ten years of their married life, the one unsatisfactory element had been that there was no child. With Gardner, the question had grown to be an obsession, and to his wife, it was even more than that, for she visioned the slipping away of their happiness; she watched stealthily for signs of a weakening of their love. If Gardner stopped to speak to a child, she stiffened and waited and looked, with fear in her heart. He felt it, too. She knew that, even through his effort not to show it—perhaps because of that effort.

Then, at last, the blessing was assured. They had been like two children in their talks and plans for the coming

of that child, wanted so long. Gardner was sent to the Mexican border. He gave his wife gladly to the mountains, eager to keep her where climate and comforts were the best. He had expected to come when the child was born. He had been unable to do so, and she had been alone to read his urgent telegrams, to answer them and to wait until he came, before she should tell him that her child had not lived.

It was in those long hours, when his coming was delayed from day to day, that the idea had come to her to substitute a child, whom, she felt sure, he would love as much as hers, if he did not know. She questioned if she could love it as much; she thought she could not. But he would; He should have the feeling of possession, if she did not. It had not seemed to be such a secret to carry, as she dreamed over it, not half so much of a burden, as the burden of his disappointment.

The days and weeks passed. She grew frightened. What could she say when he came? Was there an excuse for not telling a man when his child had died? She had thought at first, in her grief and disappointment, only of saving him—until he should be with her and she could help him bear it. Just a week and he would be with her. So she wrote a letter and did not tell. He did not come at the end of the week. He was delayed another week—two—three. It grew into a month, and then, of course, she could not tell! She could not sit down and write: "A month ago, your baby died." Impossible! She knew then that she had been insane to wait at all. She should have seen what might develop.

Then a panic seized her when she knew he had really started for home. It was in this panic that she sought a child. Hardly knowing what she was doing, in her effort to keep the old happiness, not to tear it apart by such

a confession, she frantically searched for a child. It was in that frame of mind that she saw the baby at the Foundlings' Home. Still in that frame of mind, she promised to tell her husband. And now, it was still in a desperate, elemental fear that she watched him that morning.

If only he would go away soon, before the matron had time to tell him. Then, maybe, when he came back, the dread of the telling would be past.

Lieutenant Gardner looked oddly at his wife that night, when he told her he was ordered to France, that he would leave within a few hours. Of course, what she was showing was not relief, but it looked almost like it.

"But we are not in the war," she said.

"There are many things we can learn from what they are doing over there. I am going to use my eyes, Laurie; use my mind; see how to apply to our use some of the things they have already learned."

It was decided that he should leave them at the mountain house and they would go into town within a short time. The next morning they stood together on the steps. She looked at him and caught her breath, he looked at her and waited.

"Just a few months, Laurie, and a wonderful experience! Safer than on the border, too. You need not worry. Then you have Weesie now. You have nothing to say—especially—before I go?"

"No, no. Nothing—except, be careful. You have nothing—especially—to say to me, Harry?"

"No."

Then they kissed each other, seriously and gently, those two people who had loved many years.

They smiled, too, at each other—a little wistfully, as an army man and his wife do smile at parting.

TO BE CONCLUDED NEXT MONTH.

"Ye Nut-Brown Maid"

By Valma Clark

Author of "Narcisse and the Two Me's," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY S. B. ASPELL

Concerning a girl of charm, a man of wit, and a certain beauty lotion. A refreshing love story by a promising new writer, more of whose work will appear in this magazine.

PATRICIA was sitting on one foot, quite regardless of her new black maline dancing frock. Hugh had been leaning back with that misleading air of sleepy negligence which long-suffering college instructors, in days past, had learned to recognize as a state of mental activity, a lighted fuse preliminary to a fresh explosion. He had been considering the warmly tanned V of her throat, unconcealed by a heavy dusting of powder.

"It was too absurd, Hugh," she said, chuckling over the adventure. "There I was with just those four pennies, and there was the conductor coming toward me. The man next to me was youngish, a decent-looking chap. I was desperate. So I turned to him and said, 'Pardon me, will you give me——'"

It was just at that dramatic climax that impulse led Hugh Silvernail to reach over and lightly rub the powder from the tannest part of her throat with his forefinger, with the impersonal curiosity of a boy who rubs the frost from a windowpane.

Miss Patricia van Tyne stood haughtily, a slender duplicate of her imposing mother. Frigidly she awaited his explanation.

He got to his feet and gave her the audacious, irresistible Silvernail grin.

"Oh, I say, Patsy, dear, don't be miffed," he entreated. "It's adorably browned. Pleasant associations—sandy beach, boyish middy, and all the rest.

Why cover it up?" No, not flattery, he decided as her head went still higher; skillfully he tacked. "Anyway, it was a purely scientific interest. I think I've an idea, Patsy," he said tentatively. He waited. "A corking idea!"

Curiosity stirred in Patricia's breast. "What? No," she broke off, "you weren't listening; you didn't hear a word I said. You will take me back to Jim. I have the next two dances with him," she added unnecessarily.

Hugh spent a sleepy interval of four dances alone in the library. He smoked a box of cigarettes. He occasionally murmured words to himself. "The ladies, bless 'em," he said once, inhaling deeply, "give 'em what they want—but first tell 'em what they want. Create a demand, then supply it. That's the stuff! Probably began with fancy breast plates back in Cleopatra's days. Some guy started the fad. Then smelling salts for fainting ladies of the Victorian age. The gentleman who invented smelling salts must have coined a heap of money. Beauty patches, odd shapes — powdered wigs — clocked stockings. A monopoly on eyebrow shapers." He grinned. And later, "Might call it Tanno," he muttered. "No, that sounds like a shoe polish."

Hugh came to life after the eighth cigarette and decided to make his escape. He eeled his way through the end of the crowded hall, blew a kiss to Patricia as she floated by in Jim Mon-

agen's arms, her eyes fixed on a spot above Hugh's head, and slid through the door.

He smoked another box of cigarettes in his room before he turned in. And at three o'clock he switched on his desk light and wrote rapidly for a half hour. This was the result:

A skin kissed by the sun, fingered by fresh, salt winds. Nature's skin with a healthy, outdoor color. A skin that whispers of gypsy trails through clover-sweet meadows, of warm sea beaches under flashing blue skies, of orange groves in the sunny South.

Have you ever compared the pasty, sallow complexion of the city girl, the hothouse plant, gray through its rouge, with the warmly tanned skin of the outdoor girl—the tennis girl, the bathing girl?

"Ye Nut-Brown Maid" will give you that faintly olive tint, which, with your dark eyes and dusky hair, may set you apart from others as an "interesting" woman, or may carry the alluring, daring hint of hot-blooded Spanish ancestors far back.

"Ye Nut-Brown Maid" will give you that rich, satiny, apricot tint, which, with your blue eyes and blond hair, may make you fairly radiate health and youth and vitality.

"Ye Nut-Brown Maid" is to rouge and powder what the clean, pungent odor of balsam in the open is to the choking smell of incense behind closed doors.

Right here it may be stated that Hugh Silvernail understood woman as well as it is given to any mere man to understand her. He knew, for instance, when Patricia moistened her lips with the tip of her tongue, that it was barely possible that her lips were dry, but that it was much more probable that Patricia herself was aware that moistened lips are becomingly red. He knew that the deliberate turning of a woman's head does not always mean indifference; on the contrary, the lady in question may be conscious of a Julia Marlowe profile. And he knew many other things.

Hugh Silvernail had reason to understand woman. He had been brought up by three aunts, "the Silvernail sisters." Only those who have lived in Royceville can realize fully the connotation of that name, Silvernail. Even Patricia, who

knew, of course, that the Silvernails had ancestors upon their dining-room wall even as the Van Tynes had, could not begin to understand.

Four months of each year, Hugh had lived with his youngest aunt, Fay. The fairest and least pretentious of the three sisters, she had married, he suspected, because she wanted to. At any rate, there were two blond and amiable girls. From aunt Fay and his cousins he had learned most. Mother and daughters, they had a weakness for pale pink *crêpe-de-Chine* underwear. Before he was ten, he knew the difference between a camisole and a *brassière*; at twelve, he discovered that a profusion of soft curls at the nape of the neck does not necessarily grow that way; and at eighteen, he learned that a delicate, finely arched eyebrow is not always inherited.

At the end of the four months, he moved two blocks away to the less cheerful abode of his aunt Cherlina. Cherlina, the second sister, who had a depressing sense of duty, had been pushed into marriage by her eldest sister to perpetuate the Silvernail race. There were no children, and she had turned, finally, to religion. She had made Hugh feel that beautifying ugly women might be a mission. He had never forgotten the pathetic look of gratitude she had given him when he had once patted her hand and called it "soft and white."

The last four months with aunt Hannah, in the huge old family mansion, he had hated. Hannah, with her cold, patrician face, had never married. The family forks and spoons, the family portraits, must be kept undefiled by outsiders for the next male Silvernail.

But even Hannah had her vulnerable points. Hugh remembered the time she had caught him sliding down the mahogany banisters and had taken him into her great front bedroom to punish him. He had stared solemnly at the

lady in the black velvet hat on the wall and then had turned to aunt Hannah with eyes that expressed innocent admiration. "You look like *her*," he had announced, pointing. Aunt Hannah had almost lost her dignity for a moment, as, flushing with pleasure, she turned toward her mirror. Hugh had slipped out unnoticed. Nothing had happened to him. A week or so later, aunt Hannah had appeared in a black velvet, Gainsborough hat.

From Hannah, Hugh had learned that women, *all* women, have their weak spots, if you can only find them.

Hugh yawned himself awake early, as early as nine o'clock. He had remembered Chester Wakefield, the young chemistry shark, who had openly adored him as only a seedy, hard-working sophomore can adore a brilliant, lazy senior. He splashed joyously through a cold plunge, and got his man on the telephone. Eagerly Wakefield agreed to meet him for lunch.

He stopped in the midst of his shaving to call Patricia van Tyne.

"Lo," came her sleep voice.

"Mornin', Patsy. How's the disposition?"



"Oh, I say, Patsy, dear, don't be miffed," he entreated.

"Oh," she said crossly, "it's you. What do you want?"

"Nothing," he admitted cheerfully. "Just had to hear your voice. Shall I ring off?"

"No, now that you've got me awake at this unearthly hour—I think—yes, you will take me to lunch—at Regan's—at one o'clock," she commanded. "And if I should be late, you will wait—patiently," she added.

"Not to-day, Patsy," he declined. "Sorry. Previous engagement—with 'Ye Nut Brown Maid.'" He strove to keep the grin out of his voice.

"Wh-what?" asked Patricia blankly. "Oh, very well," she said crisply, indignation getting the better of curiosity. And she cut off.

Hugh spent two weeks writing advertisements: erratic snatches on menu cards and newspaper margins, in elevators, on crowded streets; long, glowing eulogies in his own room before the dawn. He poured into his efforts all the imagery that he had crowded into the free verse, the very free verse, which he had contributed to the college paper.

A pretty girl on horseback inspired him.

The modern girl is a breeze from the open. She has flung wide the windows of that darkened parlor and has invited sunshine and fresh air to call upon her. She has galloped forth past high stone walls to the open road which leads toward the rising sun.

The modern dream of fair women is not a procession of white-faced, anæmic damsels in flowing robes. Elaine, the lily maid, is a back number. Our modern girl is aglow with life and radiant with health. She has tossed aside the cold-cream jar and has dared to tilt her face toward the sun.

It may be that you are tucked away in a steam-heated niche in the city, that you cannot get out into the sunny country.

"Ye Nut-Brown Maid" is Nature's paint brush. It will give you that rare, delicate tan which goes with the sunlight in your hair. It will make you a fit companion for that bronzed young soldier who has just returned.

A bit of Oriental jewelry in a shop window would suggest a dark-skinned Oriental beauty. The thing became almost an obsession with him.

In between inspirations, he drew half of his diminished fortune, his legacy from his father, from the bank, rented an office downtown, and set about furnishing it. And he persistently phoned young Wakefield for results.

There came a day when Wakefield admitted that he might have hit it. Hugh forgot the simile he had been struggling with—a skin like the golden russet of a fall apple—and sprinted for the street.

He coughed as he plunged into the sulphuric gloom of the chemical laboratory. Wakefield rubbed his hand on his grimy apron and awkwardly came to meet him.

"You've got it, Wakey?" demanded Hugh. "Let's see."

"Well, I don't know. Maybe you won't—Here it is, anyway," apologized the boy, producing a vial of brown liquid. "This is the color," he added, rubbing a little on the back of his hand.

"Hm. Good!" said Hugh, bending over the hand. "Can you make it weaker or stronger—anywhere from an old ivory to a copper?"

"That's easy," agreed Wakefield. "It's a combination of—"

"Harmless?" cut in Hugh.

"Yes. And washes off," returned the other. "See," he added, turning on the faucet.

"Wakey, old scout, we're made!" flashed Hugh. "You're a wonder! It's fifty-fifty—partnership," he continued, dropping a hand on the boy's shoulder.

Wakefield flushed.

"Gosh—you're a—prince!" he stammered. "I couldn't let you. It's your idea. Any chemist could have—It's just a combination of—"

"Oh, shut up!" grinned Hugh. "Argument's closed. You manage the

laboratory end; I handle the business end. We're millionaires inside of a year. Come on. We're going to lunch." Then, after a moment, "Rather nasty odor," he said, sniffing at the vial. "Can you camouflage it?"

"Perfume?" suggested Wakefield.

"No, perfume's stuffy, artificial. Something which spells outdoors with a capital O," he continued thoughtfully. "I've got it, Wakey—a woody odor—balsam. Could you do it?"

"Sure I can," replied Wakefield recklessly.

It was several days later that Hugh called Patricia for the first time in two weeks.

"Hello, Patsy," he greeted her.

"How do you do?" she returned frigidly.

"Say, I want you to come down to my office," he said, unabashed. "This afternoon. How about it?"

"Your office," she echoed.

"Yes, my office. It's the Granite Building, third floor, across from the elevator. Sorry I haven't time to call for you. You'll come?"

"I have—another engagement," she offered uncertainly.

"Cut it. I want to introduce you to 'Ye Nut-Brown Maid,' Patsy."

"Well——"

"Besides, I need your advice, dear," he said plaintively.

That clinched it. What woman can refuse a plea for advice?

Patricia waited ten minutes in the hall so that she might not be on time. And as she studied the brown letters on the door: YE NUT-BROWN MAID—HUGH SILVERNAIL, her curiosity mounted.

She gave a little gasp as she finally stepped into the amazing bit of woodland which was Hugh's office. Brown rugs, brown walls and ceiling, masses of autumn leaves everywhere, a brown Nantucket in the corner, landscapes, a woodland vista with a girl swinging

lithely along the path in the foreground, a country road with——

But just at that moment, Hugh blotted out the picture. He was offering her a bottle of ugly brown stuff which looked like cold coffee.

"'Ye Nut-Brown Maid,'" he said with the proud air of a father exhibiting his first born.

"What on earth—— It smells rather nice," she admitted. "But what is it for?"

He produced a sponge and took the bottle from her.

"Come here, Patsy," he commanded with the dignity of a general conferring the Croix de Guerre. "I want you to christen it. Hold up your face. Don't squirm; it won't hurt," he assured her, grasping her firmly. "There! Now look in the mirror," he ordered, genuine admiration in his tone.

"Oh," she sputtered, "you mean old—— Where? Why, it's made me all brown—like an old witch! Bother! Where can I wash it off?"

"Well, it is on a bit heavy," he admitted with his easy grin. "Ivory would suit you better. But you get the idea?"

"You're perfectly insane!" she snapped. "No woman wants to look like that. Why——"

"Now you wait," he shot back at her. Patricia's eyes widened. She had never seen Hugh in a temper. "You wait until you've seen my ads. Come here. Read that." Patricia read.

"Sounds — good," she admitted meekly.

"And that," he said.

"Hm!" Her interest grew. "'Gypsy trails,' that's good." She read on through the pile of typewritten sheets. "You're a poet, Hugh, even if you can't write poetry," she announced at last.

"Thanks," he replied dryly. He swung himself on to the desk before her and, leaning forward, he spoke in keen, incisive tones quite different from his usual teasing drawl. "It's got to



"I want you to christen it. Hold up your face. Don't squirm; it won't hurt," he assured her.

go. It *will* go! I've placed my first ads. Campaign starts next week, starts with a bang. We've a week to pack enough for the local druggists. We're putting it on here first. If it goes in Westport, we'll try the big places—New York, Chicago." Impatiently, he pushed back a lock of hair. "I'm putting every cent I have into it. It's a case of sink or swim, no halfway floating measures," he continued, relapsing to the more normal, whimsical manner. "What's your advice, Patsy?"

Eyes very bright, head on one side, Patricia considered.

"You mean——"

"Sure! Same old thing. Adam wants Eve's opinion—especially since Eve's the victim. Any crack in this particular jar—speaking from the inside?"

"Well," said Patricia, picking up the vial, "it's so ugly! It looks like dog medicine, something for fleas. Couldn't you change the color or something?"

"That's what I said," he agreed quickly. "But Wakey says no."

"Hm," she commented, cupping her chin in her two hands. "Go 'way. Let me think."

Hugh strolled to the window.

"I've got it," she said, turning him about after a long minute. "An attractive package, something unusual. How about an acorn, a brown acorn that opens up?"

"By George, you're a wonder, Patsy!" he exclaimed. "That'll do it. And think of the associations—autumn days in the woods. I can write a dozen ads. Of course, it'll cost more," he added thoughtfully. "We were putting it out at fifty cents retail."

"Pshaw!" she exclaimed wisely, rising. "Make 'em pay. I'd put it up to a dollar. They like to pay; it gives them more respect. Do your aunts know, Hugh?" she asked irrelevantly.

"Lord, no!" he said, laughing out. "A gentleman beauty specialist in the Silvernail family? An uncle or something once went into business—casket manufacturing, a thoroughly respectable line. They never speak of him." They laughed together.

"Tea to-morrow?" she asked, as she drew on her gloves. "Nobody home but the ancestors. It's mother's afternoon at the League."

"Sorry," he said regretfully. "I'm so darned busy, Patsy."

"Yes?" she mocked. She snapped the fastener of her glove and moved toward the door. "You know, Hugh," she announced, turning back quite seriously, her color rather high, "as a business man, I may find you—irresistible." And she fled.

There came the red-letter day of the first order, a small, six-gross allotment to be rushed to the town's largest drug store. That meant that people were buying; the initial supply in that particular store had been exhausted. Mornings found Hugh up early, the local newspapers scattered about him, as he searched for the day's ad; afternoons he haunted the drug stores for returns. There were a few scattered orders during that week. There were also bills, advertising bills chiefly. And

then Hugh began to realize that there was something the matter with his bait; he was getting only nibbles.

He told his troubles to Patsy when she dropped in on her way to a luncheon. She wandered about the room abstractedly.

"Has Madame Lucrèce taken it on?" she asked finally.

"Madame Lucrèce," he repeated blankly. "Oh, you mean the beauty-parlor siren. She sent back that first allotment. Wait, let me see," he said, turning to run through his file. "Yes, here it is." He thumbed a rose-colored paper. "Says that her shop's 'distinctly French in tone,' 'patronized by the élite,' has no use for 'character make-up.' We dropped her off the list."

Patricia frowned.

"That's it, Hugh," she decided suddenly. "You've got to get Lucrèce. It's mob psychology," she explained wisely. "Lucrèce is the Antony of the beauty cult here in Westport. They follow her like woolly lambs. Why, the shopgirls, the stenographers, all the big middle-class element that you bump up against in the streets, Hugh, they never start things. They're the nice, conservative folks who always copy models. They wear coed dresses because Elsie Janis does, and shirt-waist rings on their little fingers because Mrs. Vander-somebody-or-other does, and bungalow aprons because Billie Burke wore a darling blue-and-white one in that rose-garden scene in her last play.

"Why do you suppose every Pearl and Sadie and Violet would have short hair now, if Mrs. Joslyn-Emerson hadn't started it? And Lucrèce did the job for Mrs. Joslyn-Emerson. If Lucrèce had happened to lift one eyebrow and curl her lips at the spectacle of a bobbed head, we'd all be wearing Psyche knots or Greek swirls or something right this minute."

And so it happened that Hugh stepped confidently from the rattling

glare of Main Street into the softly lighted, faintly perfumed, rose-and-gold reception room of Madame Lucrece's beauty parlor. He blinked slightly. A tall, thin woman in black with the reddest hair he had ever seen trailed a languid way toward him.

"*Bon jour, monsieur,*" she murmured. "Can I be of service?"

Hugh hesitated before the sphinxlike, pink-and-white mask. Then he smiled boyishly, disarmingly.

"It is Madame Lucrece, herself," he said, achieving intense admiration. "I—I—hardly—hoped——" he stammered slightly.

The sphinx lifted two curiously flexible, dark eyebrows, which had length, but no breadth, and waited. Again Hugh groped for inspiration. He knew, and he knew that she knew, that a tan complexion does *not* go with flame-colored hair. With auburn tints, perhaps, with a copper shade, just possibly, but with the color that is flame, no!

"It's most awfully good of you," he said reverently. "I am Hugh Silvernail. I've sort of—worshiped—from a distance. I never dared—— And then, when I put my new stuff on the market, I thought you might——" He held out to her his sample package.

"Ah"—the eyebrows shifted just perceptibly—"what is it?" she asked, ignoring the sample.

"'Ye Nut-Brown Maid's' the name," replied Hugh confidently. "Let me show——"

"Bah," she interjected without emotion, "it is that! So! *Bon jour.*" And she turned her back.

"Wait!" Hugh spoke crisply, "You do not understand, madame. It is not a stage make-up. It is——"

"I have seen the advertisements. *Quelle folie! Bon jour.*" And she withdrew to the inner shrine.

"Damn!" muttered Hugh as he left.

Fifteen minutes later, in his office, he found the telegram.

"Good Lord!" he exclaimed as he read it. "Wakey! Hey, Wakey!" he called to the unsuspecting partner of his troubles, as he jerked open the door of the small laboratory. "They're coming—all three of 'em—to-night. You tend to business. I'll be back." The door slammed behind him.

He paced the floor of the Van Tyne drawing-room as he waited for Patricia. She entered humming.

"Look at this, Patsy," he said, thrusting the telegram at her. "You've got to help me. What shall I do?"

Patricia forgot and whistled her boarding-school whistle as she read.

"The four-twenty," she repeated. "Do they know?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Sounds like they've heard something—all three at once!"

Glancing at her wrist watch, Patricia suddenly became efficient.

"You leave it to me. I'll meet them and bring them here. You come for dinner. Which one's the ringleader?"

"Patsy dear, you're—beyond belief," said Hugh from his heart. "If you will, I'll—— Aunt Hannah is."

"Run along," she returned. "I'll tackle aunt Hannah. Oh, did you see Lucrece?" she called, following him.

"Yes. Slipped up," he replied laconically. "She's hard as nails, that woman."

Patricia spoke to the cook, ordered her car for four o'clock, and left a note for her mother. Then she walked about her room, straightening a picture, rearranging a bowl of roses, humming meanwhile. Finally, she seated herself at the telephone and held a brief conversation with each of her four best friends.

Arriving promptly at six, Hugh dutifully kissed each of his three aunts. He fancied aunt Hannah a shade haughtier toward him than usual. But he was safe in the presence of the Van Tynes, for aunt Hannah was nothing, if not



"Bah," she interjected without emotion, "it is that! So! *Bon jour.*" And she turned her back.

well bred. And meantime, the aunts seemed to be getting on remarkably well with Mrs. Van Tyne and Patricia. Mrs. Van Tyne and aunt Hannah had been comparing family trees and had discovered that the Silvernails and the Van Tynes had originally come from the same part of England. Patricia had been showing aunt Fay and aunt Cherrina the family album.

Things went smoothly; it was a fair evening, Hugh admitted. It was not until Hugh rose to go, Mrs. Van Tyne

having cordially insisted that the aunts spend the week-end with her, that Hannah announced that she wished a few words with her nephew before his departure. Patricia pinched him as she withdrew with the others.

"You know why we have journeyed here from Royceville?" Hannah asked in her grand manner.

Hugh stood before her deferentially. He remembered the time he had been summoned before her for running away from church to hunt mud turtles.

"Well, yes," he admitted gravely.

"We have heard," she said severely. "I felt it necessary to bring the weight of the family to bear."

"Oh, come, aunt Hannah," he said with a grin, seating himself chummily on the upholstered arm of her throne. "There's nothing to row about."

Hannah held herself upright.

"The matter is distasteful to me—to us," she said. "You understand our position. Miss Van Tyne is a charming young lady," she continued cannily. "I think I may safely say we Silvernails would approve of her. You would, of course, ruin your chance of an alliance with her."

The wayward demon of impulse that dwelt in Hugh took over the reins.

"But she approves, aunt Hannah. We are engaged, Patricia and I. In fact, she won't marry me at all unless I make good with this."

There followed more. Hugh stuck to his point—smilingly at first, then stubbornly, then wearily. The session was at length adjourned until morning.

The thing had ceased to be funny to Hugh by the time he reached his room; he was wondering how Patsy would take it. An impartial observer who had never known the careless, happy-go-lucky Hugh might almost have accused him of worrying. "An utter ass," he was mumbling as he fell asleep.

His voice was not exactly audacious when he got Patricia on the phone in the morning.

"Hello," he apologized. "I—I'm sorry to get you up. Fact is," he continued, swallowing slightly, "I had to get ahead of aunt Hannah."

"Yes?" she asked.

"Yes. I—I—I say, Patsy, you're going to be sore. I told aunt Hannah we were—you and I were—engaged."

"Oh," murmured Patricia.

"I don't know why I—— But she's fallen for you, Patsy, and it came to me suddenly. And I told her you

wouldn't—wouldn't marry me—unless I made good at this."

Patricia's answer was muffled.

"What? What did you say?" he asked anxiously.

"I said—your—aunt Hannah is—rather a dear. We mustn't let her—perhaps we'd better pretend——"

"Oh, would you, Patsy?" he interrupted eagerly. "It wouldn't be long. I was afraid—You're no end of a good scout!"

"Thank you," she replied distinctly. There was just a ripple of amusement in her voice.

"Until lunch, then. Good-by—dear," he said.

"She's right about it—Miss Van Tyne is," Hugh said to Wakefield later. He had been figuring rapidly at his desk. "We're in bad, Wakey. Another statement from Glydonn & Haffield this morning on the advertising. We've got to raise cash. I might borrow again from the bank if I could prove the thing's going. But with figures like this! The stuff's all right. I'm sure of it. But we're dealing with women—an uncertain element. We've got to get this Madame Lucrèce to back it. Patricia—Miss Van Tyne's right."

Wakefield ran a lank forefinger about the edge of his collar.

"She's a hard customer," continued Hugh, rising. "I tackled her yesterday. She'd show me the door, Wakey. I'm afraid it's up to you. You go brush up and run down to Madame Lucrèce's."

"M—me?" stuttered Wakefield.

"Yes, it can't do any harm. And I'll write her a series of letters in case you fail. We'll bombard her."

"But I've never been inside a beauty place—honestly I haven't," said Wakefield pitifully. "I——"

Just at that moment there came a sharp knock, and a messenger boy ambled in, bearing a yellow envelope.

As Hugh read the message, a slow grin spread over his face. "You're

saved, Wakey, old scout," he announced. "It's from Lucrèce. An order for a cross. It's beyond me."

"How do you account for it, Patsy?" asked Hugh later. Dinner was over and they had escaped to the small music room. Patricia, seated at the piano, was picking out, with one finger, a nondescript tune, the words of which, had Hugh known it, went like this:

You may study her ways as you can,
But a woman's too much for a man;
It is deeper than diving for pearls,
Courting girls, girl, girls.

"How do you account for it?"

"Well, I don't," she replied. "I asked for 'Ye Nut-Brown Maid' when I stopped in for a manicure only this afternoon, and Madame Lucrèce was frosty enough about it." Patricia did not add that each of her four best friends with all their best friends, a fair-sized corner of Westport's most influential maiden population, had called casually at Madame Lucrèce's Beauty Shop during the day to inquire for "Ye Nut-Brown Maid."

"Anyway, I've a hunch it'll go," continued Hugh. "It's like an avalanche. You've got to start it from the top if it's going to work up any speed and collect any rocks along the way."

Patricia smiled a small smile. She had said the same thing in a different way only yesterday.

"I say, Patsy, it's rather a shame to disappoint the old girl," said Hugh.

"The old girl?" she repeated.

"Aunt Hannah."

Patsy registered indifference by continuing to drum with one finger.

The moment for masterful assertion had arrived. Hugh stood.

"Come here, Patsy," he commanded.

It simply did not work. Patricia pivoted on the piano stool, regarded him thoughtfully for a long moment, and then smiled very sweetly.

"You always remind me of Napoleon

when you stand like that. It's effective, Hugh, dear," she remarked. Uncomfortably Hugh shifted his position. "I'm engaged to you—temporarily—for your aunt Hannah's sake. But you can't expect me to marry you just to please aunt Hannah. And I'd do a lot for her, too," she added, rising and laughing back at him from the doorway. "She has good taste in girls—your aunt Hannah."

On a July Sunday morning, some two months later, Hugh lay sprawled beside Patricia on the sun-warmed beach before the Van Tyne summer home.

"Three thousand in orders this week, twenty-two hundred in collections," he was answering her, as he marked her initials in the sand. "Wakey's taken to buying silk shirts at twenty per, with ties to match. Mustard with green stripes, the last one was. He has no taste, that boy."

He flopped over and relapsed into silence as he gazed up at her. He was writing mental ads around a delicately sunburned girl in crisp white organdy—like the foam on the rim of the cream-colored beach over there—or like a fresh peach sundae with whipped cream on a sizzling day in town.

"A new advertising campaign, you said? What cities?" she was asking.

"Oh, bother 'Ye Nut-Brown Maid!'" he ejaculated, raising himself to a seat beside her with a sudden movement. "Patsy, dear—do you—care—a rap about me?" he asked humbly, stammering like a schoolboy. "Because—if you could—" He gulped. Patsy's smile held tenderness, approval, and encouragement—and something more. "If you could, you know—"

"You're sure it's not just aunt Hannah?" asked Patricia tentatively.

Hugh bent to see her face.

"Darn aunt Hannah!" he exclaimed joyously.

Mischief

By Winona Godfrey

Author of "The Precious Hour," "Her Own Price," etc



ILLUSTRATED BY
LAURA E. FOSTER

A story that might happen anywhere. A little study of character and incident that is packed with food for thought.

I'VE wondered a good deal since just what made Mrs. Silsby the kind of woman she was. But that question, of course, is as wide as humanity. Not that Mrs. Silsby was complex. She was that very ordinary thing, a gossip—one of those people with an insatiable interest in other people's affairs and a tendency to put the worst construction on appearances. In the town of Midvale very few things happened without a comment from Mrs. Silsby. She was a stout, rather striking-looking woman of fifty, with white hair and sharp little black eyes in a smiling olive face. She belonged to church and to lodges and was always on hand at all the socials and installments and sewing circles. And she knew all about the Smiths' finances, the Browns' domestic difficulties, the Jones boy's disgrace, the Haggerty girl's indiscretion. You know the sort. Silsby was dead—talked to death, the townsfolk said.

Mrs. Silsby's specialty, though, was *girls*. Many a well-meaning Midvale girl discovered to her surprise and sorrow that she was "talked about." Whether Mrs. Silsby had never enjoyed the innocent pleasures of girlhood herself or whether she had pursued them too strenuously, I don't know, but purity was a quality she apparently doubted—in everybody's daughter but her own, that is. For Mrs. Silsby had a daughter of her own.

Darlene Silsby was about nineteen, a quiet sort of girl, pretty in an every-day way, and completely dominated

by her mother after the manner of such mother-and-daughter combinations. Darlene, trailing her mother to socials and sewing circles, never had much to say, and she never had any beaux, not because she was unattractive to the boys, but because they were afraid of her mother's tongue. And Darlene was afraid to call her soul her own.

It was in June that Kemper Cullinane came to locate in Midvale as law partner to old Judge Gregg, who needed a younger man to attend to his practice. Cullinane was what Midvale called "smart." He dressed in the very latest fashion, had a natty little roadster, and a liking for feminine society.

I suppose Mrs. Silsby's inquisitive nose scented his drift from the first and sniffed enjoyably at the promise of something to whisper about. Sure enough, it wasn't long before he was suspected of an affair with the dashing little divorcee, Adelaide Tenter, and, of course, it was Mrs. Silsby's tongue that wagged the most insinuatingly. That riled Cullinane and, meeting Mrs. Silsby on the street one day, he was foolish enough to request her to mind her own business. Perhaps she didn't pan him any worse as his enemy than she would have, anyway, but from that time on, any woman seen with Cullinane was marked by Mrs. Silsby for slaughter, and no matter how well people know these scandalmongers, it seems to be human nature to linger around so as to be in at the death of a reputation.

You could pretty nearly guess that Mrs. Silsby would not be on good terms with her neighbors, and the Andrew Staples lived right next door. That trouble started when Darlene was in school with Barbara Staples, who was about the same age. Barbara had asked Darlene to go somewhere or do something and Darlene didn't dare without asking mother. The high-spirited Barbara said something about Mrs. Silsby being a cat, anyway, and Darlene just a mouse, too. The Staples had laughed at the schoolgirl quarrel. Mrs. Silsby said something spiteful and the said Staples something back. Eventually diplomatic relations were broken off, and the Staples built what Mrs. Silsby called a spite fence between the two places. In the years since, Barbara and Darlene had learned to smile shyly at each other when they passed, with something almost like affection. But Mrs. Silsby was thought to "still have it in for" the Staples.

So what were Mrs. Silsby's feelings when Kemper Cullinane began to be a frequent visitor to the house of Staples! Oddly enough, she made much less comment than might have been expected,

when she saw Barbara lingering over the front gate, laughing with Cullinane.

"I see Kemper Cullinane has started something new," said said to Darlene.

Darlene looked out at the good-looking young man just lifting his hat to the merry Barbara.

"I think Mr. Cullinane looks real nice," she said thoughtfully. "Maybe it's just talk about him, mother."



Two figures sat together in their snug little nook, her head on his shoulder, his arm about her waist.

"Maybe it is," agreed Mrs. Silsby. "But where there's so much smoke, you know, Darlene——" That was her way. "That Barbara's a flighty one or I miss my guess."

"Barbara just likes fun, I think." Darlene's tone was touched with a vague wistfulness.

Her mother said nothing more to Darlene, contenting herself with watchful waiting. She just had a hunch, she told herself, that something was going to come off there.

Nights, after Darlene had gone to her room, Mrs. Silsby, prepared for bed, would put out her light and, slipping across a tiny back hall into a little sewing room, would sit by the window overlooking the Staples' place.

Summer seemed unwilling this year to resign herself to inevitable autumn, and it must have been very pleasant to feel the cool night wind in her face and to smell the roses and honeysuckle it wafted up from the Staples' garden. The Staples' garden, shut off from the Silsbys' downstairs' view by the spite fence, was the pride of Andrew Staples, who seemed to think the more he got into it the better. It was on a corner, and a pergola roofed with grapes and bougainvillea ran from the kitchen door, turned at right angles just houseward of the garage, and extended to the gate on the side street. At the angle was a rustic seat with its back to the pergola, facing the Silsbys', and screened from the Staples' windows by a clump of thick-foliaged shrubs. Of course, Mrs. Silsby could not know that something was going to happen in the Staples' garden, it must have been that she had especially developed antennae for sensing intrigue. She sat there in the dark window, not watching exactly, for there was nothing to watch—but waiting.

Kemper Cullinane's visits to the Staples became more and more frequent. Mrs. Silsby would hear him

saying good night about ten o'clock, Barbara laughingly crying: "Go straight home now!" Then the click of the gate latch, the whirr of the starter on Cullinane's car, another good night, and the car purring off down the street. Mrs. Silsby sitting there—smiling.

And then, one night, after all this, as she looked down into the Staples' garden, a man stole through the pergola from the side street and seated himself on that rustic bench! There was no moon, but the night was not dark, and from his characteristic movements, his light straw hat, Mrs. Silsby recognized him instantly. It was Cullinane. In five minutes a slim, girlish figure suddenly appeared from the pergola beside him. Of course—Barbara!

Three or four nights a week after the Silsby and the Staples houses were dark, those two figures sat together in their snug little nook, her head on his shoulder, his arm about her waist. And Mrs. Silsby, unseen, unsuspected, sat above—like a sardonic goddess watching from heaven.

Probably no situation could have been devised which would have been more pleasing to that lady. How stiff-necked Andrew Staples would rave if he knew! And that little snip, Barbara, wouldn't sail so complacently about town if *she* knew! And Cullinane, received so cordially by the Staples, with every opportunity to pay honorable court, could have no good motive in this sly underhandedness.

Mrs. Silsby slipped out of the house one night and around the block to where she suspected Cullinane had left his car. The lots on the street back of the Silsby and Staples places were vacant, and the parking strip was well shaded by big trees, so that Cullinane could leave his car under them with little fear of its being noticed. Mrs. Silsby satisfied herself that the car was there with no motive but curiosity. She had made no plan for the confounding

of the lovers, the humiliation of Andrew Staples. And why *should* she warn her enemies of their daughter's impending destruction? Yet, characteristically, she itched to have a finger in it, to let the Staples know how much she knew, to call the turn on that popinjay, Cullinane!

Mrs. Silsby had seen Cullinane go into the Staples' that night, so she took up her usual vigil at the sewing-room window, sitting there rocking with apparent placidity in a little old chair. And it made her smile grimly the way things took their usual course—Cullinane's good nights to the Staples, driving off, presently emerging stealthily from the pergola to sink down in what seemed an attitude of elation upon the trysting bench.

There was a moon, but dark splotches of cloud scudded so rapidly across its light that Mrs. Silsby could get only momentary glimpses of the familiar scene. Suddenly she stopped rocking and leaned eagerly forward. The slim figure of Barbara had joined Cullinane and she set down on the ground between them—a *suit case*.

Mrs. Silsby slapped her knee with a noiseless gesture of enjoyment. Barbara was going to elope with Cullinane! So! Well—should she, Mrs. Silsby, let



For a moment the tableau held—three pairs of eyes staring at the pretty, excited little face in the spotlight.

him get away with it? She could thwart him and see the mortification of the Staples at the same time! She looked again. They were not hurrying off. Barbara stood as if hesitating. Mrs. Silsby ran downstairs, indifferent as to whether Darlene should wake and wonder, out her own front gate, and into the Staples', making little noise now, however; up on the porch—Mrs. Staples had a bad knee, and she and Andrew occupied a downstairs bedroom, opening on this porch. Andrew responded almost immediately to Mrs. Silsby's knock on their door. Holding

his bath robe around him, he stared in amazement at the not pleasing face of the intruder.

"Andrew Staples!" she cried not loudly, but with a shrill note. "Barbara's running off with Cullinane. If you want to stop 'em, you better hurry!"

"Barbara's upstairs in bed!" he retorted angrily.

"Bah! She's spoonin' in the back garden with Cullinane, like she is five nights a week! And she's got a suit case! Want to see 'em?"

Mrs. Staples was getting out of bed. "Don't do anything hasty, pa," she quavered.

Andrew snatched something from a bureau drawer and followed Mrs. Silsby around the house.

"See! See!" she whispered, catching his arm. At the other end of the pergola two dim figures were visible. Andrew ran toward them.

The girl gave a little cry of terror, Cullinane seized her by the hand, grabbed the suit case, and the two fled through the pergola, toward the car waiting around the corner.

Andrew and Mrs. Silsby ran after them.

"Stop, Barbara! Stop, I tell you!" Andrew roared.

Around the corner the fugitives seemed to hesitate. Barbara half turned as if she had a notion to parley with the pursuers, but as she looked back, Mrs. Silsby was just under the street lamp. For a second her face, with its malicious smile, its for once undissembled spite, was lighted as a witch's in the light of her caldron. With a cry the girl fled from it.

They were at the car, Cullinane fumbling at the door, snatching it open, bundling the girl in.

"Stop, or I'll fire!" panted Andrew.

"Shoot him!" hissed Mrs. Silsby.

Andrew pulled the trigger, forgetting that the gun had not been loaded for ten years. But the pointing thing had a sinister look, and besides, those are the very ones that are always killing people. Cullinane stopped in the very act of stepping into the car and, with a shrug, waited for the angry father to come up.

"You damned scoundrel!" said Andrew. "What'd you mean——"

"I don't see what business it is of yours," said Cullinane coolly. He looked at Mrs. Silsby, panting, too, but with a triumphant face and an obvious enjoyment of this climax. "We'll be married at Clifton."

"Stand aside!" ordered the furious Andrew. "Barbara, get out of that car—this minute!"

But the girl had slipped over into the driver's seat and started the engine. She made no motion to obey.

"Have you gone crazy?" choked Andrew, reaching for her.

Cullinane held him off with a long, strong arm, while he pulled an electric torch from his own pocket. He was smiling.

The sudden light found the startled face of the girl at the wheel.

It was Darlene.

For a moment the tableau held—three pairs of eyes staring at the pretty, excited little face in the spotlight. Then Cullinane pushed Andrew back and sprang into the car with a "Let her go, honey!" There was a grating of gears and the machine sprang forward.

Without a word Andrew turned back to the house, not even deigning to notice the stony figure of Mrs. Silsby, who still stood with her mouth slightly open.



When *the* Train Was Late

By Anne O'Hagan

Author of "The Big Thing," "The Wife of Asa Pincheon," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY R. VAN BUREN

A vivid, distinctive story of married life and a letter that was never read.

I. Ira.

IRA ROMLEY, seated at the long, flat table desk at which his almost-best sellers were produced, laid down the pencil with which he was inscribing what would appear, from the linear division, to be verse, and took up for the third or fourth time in the hour the faintly scented sheets of a letter written in a bold feminine hand. The mere emanation of perfume from the creamy paper, cut rather large and stamped with an involved and dashing monogram which to the initiated spelled the name "Mona," sent a flush over his handsome, dark, weak face.

"Insane child! Reckless little fool!" he murmured as he read. But the epithets were spoken with a smile.

It is not as if you had any children to consider—

He read the sentence again and nodded, biting at his lip. There had been a time when the fact that he and Edith were deprived of the hope of another child to replace the one who had breathed out its little life before its mother had risen from her bed of sickness, had been ground for an added faithfulness, a more tender devotion to Edith. But that was long ago, before Mona's day, before the lighter days of Mona's trifling predecessors.

It is only to make three people unhappy instead of one.

Again he nodded. Mona's mathematics were impeccable. There was no question that Edith was unhappy, there

was no question that he was, if not unhappy, at any rate bored to death, irritated, disgruntled. And Mona—dear, ardent, outgiving spendthrift of emotion!—she made no secret of her dissatisfaction, of her jealousy. Certainly they were all unhappy now; if he adopted the sensational suggestion of his correspondent, perhaps Edith would be still more unhappy for a little while. But, eventually, she would be happier. And for him and Mona the 'eventual' future would begin to-morrow—no, to-night, this very night. He recalled Mona's decision.

"Anyway, you are doing her an injustice, too. She is a proud woman—you have often told me so. A proud woman does not want to keep her husband—how I hate that legal-sounding word!—her lover through law or pity or habit. I don't. I should hate you, I should kill you, if you ever tried to impose upon me with any of those substitutes for love. I admit there isn't a great deal of resemblance between us, me and her, but I'll wager that at bottom she feels the same way. It is an insult to her pride to keep on like this."

He wondered! Mona was only twenty-two, ten years younger than Edith, thirteen years younger than himself. The years changed women's emotions. He doubted that love meant the same thing in his wife's vocabulary that it meant in this new flame's. Did it even mean the same thing in his own? He shut the door of his memory swiftly

upon a glimmering recollection of a dozen faces that had laughed or sighed, and, laughing or sighing, had lured his fancy in the twelve years of his marriage. This, of course, was different, he told himself. He was the sort of man who matured late—emotionally, that is. Mentally and artistically, he had matured quite young. He had been a brilliant fellow, a coming writer despite his youth, when he and Edith had married. But, emotionally—

Oh, what was the use of kidding himself, of trying to dress up the situation with fine names, of justifying what would probably strike most of the world as unjustifiable—caddish, even? He was a man of easy susceptibility. Edith, it seemed, was one of those women whose existence his tales usually ignored—a dully monogamous being. Of course, he had believed himself in love with her when he married her! Not all her money, not all the cachet which her family's position had given to him, would have weighed an instant with him had he not been in love with her! He would not falsify that past even to justify this present.

He had been in love with Edith, and he was no longer in love with her. Now he was quite insanely in love, instead, with Mona Irwin. He had had a half-dozen—ten—a dozen flirtations of varying degrees of intensity since his marriage, but this differed from them all. It was more serious. And, to a certain extent, Edith knew about it. The others had, for the most part, been conducted out of the range of her acquaintance. Presumably she had suspected; indeed, she had made it quite obvious that she suspected.

But the various enchantresses of the hour had not been on her visiting list. He wished that Mona were not. It made the thing uglier, if one were going to look at it in the conventional way. Still, the little firebrand was awfully clever! Perhaps she was right about

Edith. Perhaps it was an insult to a proud woman to remain with her for any reason except love.

"You have never lived your own life, only hers. Always part of that insufferable, dull, snobbish set at Blue Hills—worse even than ours here at Montvale. We're at least considered fast! But that set! Always deadened by their conventions and comforts, their dull regard for their stocks and bonds! It's a miracle that you have been able to write a line—living in that atmosphere. Even when you traveled—don't I know? Wasn't I born into the same set? Haven't I stifled in it almost all my life? Even when you traveled you merely took a little bit of Blue Hills abroad with you to Florence or Budapest or Petrograd.

Only you've never been to Budapest or Petrograd. You've never been into the African desert. You've never lived with diamond miners and ranchmen and ticket-of-leave men at Cape Town. You're going to, Ira! We're going to travel about the world, living its life, not our stuffy, stultifying little bit of life. We'll forget Blue Hills and we'll forget my own little section of Philistia and we'll spend a year, two years, three, as long as we want, sampling every sort of life that intrigues us, for as long as we want to sample it. How you will write after that!"

"By Jove, she's right!" Romley struck his hand sharply on the desk. It *had* been a horribly narrow existence he had led with Edith since he and Edith walked out from the correct, Gothic church into the blue and gold of that long-gone, rose-laden June day. What was it that made Conrad and Kipling? Oh, native genius, no doubt! But, added to that, more important than that, the fact that they had sailed the Seven Seas. He had a vision of Mona, wonderfully alluring in a gypsy's costume, lolling by his side in some strange, smokey, wild place in the

Carpathians. That was what he needed—travel, adventure, a taste of lawlessness. She was a wonderful child to have discovered it. Edith's best suggestion for his recurring disease of boredom, of a distaste for life, of talent gone stale, was a riding trip in the Yellowstone or a cottage at Santa Barbara for the season!

"I'm glad with all my heart that I am alone in the world, mistress of my money, mistress of myself. My school-teachers and my distant relatives have first pitied me for being a solitary and then attributed all my faults to it. But I'm glad I'm free. There's nobody to deny me my will, and my will is to live as I please—with you. When she gets her divorce we can be married—if we want to, that is. But, married or not, I shall never want to hold you a second after you cease to want to be held. Nor shall I stay with you a second after the staying ceases to be rapture. Oh, how ugly, how revolting are all sorts of shackles!"

She was young, of course; young and romantic. The trained analyst which all these years of writing had made him dissected her. Young and romantic and headstrong, but, to him, utterly captivating! She liked to defy the world. The uproar of scandal would amuse her. It would be as sweet in her nos-



In a case like hers, she supposed there was the possibility of separation, maybe of divorce.

trils as the perfume of home gardens and hearthfires was in Edith's. Wild, bad, adorable creature, with her beauty and her imperiousness and her lavish ardor!

"We could go on this way for years—that is, some people could. I couldn't. I wouldn't! That would only mean to grow as dull, as bored with each other

as you and she have grown, as nine out of every ten—no, I mean ninety-nine out of every hundred—married couples in the world have grown. But not for me, thank you! It's all or nothing. It's a fine, furious, splendid flowering, or it's nothing at all. And it's now or never! I'm honest. I don't dress a thing up with sanctimonious talk. I'm ready to elope with you and to glory in defying the whole wretched bunch of Pharisees who have built up the system that keeps us apart. But I'm not willing to hold your hand behind doors, to have a sort of upper-housemaid flirtation with you. All or nothing! Now or never! Take your choice.

"I shall be furious if you throw me down, of course, but I'm quite sure I shan't die of a broken heart. I'm quite sure I'm going to live a splendid, flaming life. I'm just offering to let you in on it because, dear old thing, *dearest* old thing, I happen to be crazily in love with you. I'll be at home, on the wire at eight o'clock, waiting to hear your decision. I've made mine."

He looked at the little silver clock ticking away the minutes on his desk. Edith had given it to him. Hang Edith, with her money and her gifts! Thank Heaven, he had reached a place where he was able to give her luxurious gifts as well! Oh, of course, the income from best sellers was not equal to that from the investments which her grandfather's narcotic pills had made possible! He wasn't as rich as that inheritance had made her, but still, no one could ever taunt him with having lived on her and then deserted her, broken her heart—

It was five minutes of eight. He was bored to death with his life. He was bored with his wife. He was in love with that young creature compounded of fire and daring, of beauty and diablerie, who offered him, so boldly, so unashamedly, what it had

never occurred to him as possible to ask.

"All or nothing! Now or never!" She was absurd, she was childish with her ultimatums! When she was older, she would know that life did not arrange itself so simply. Still, why not? Why should not men and women courageous enough to challenge life get what they wanted out of it? Wasn't the whole thing a matter of daring? Wasn't it because men and women were cowards, convention-bound cowards, that they failed to achieve shining fates? Perhaps, after all—

Anyway, he would call her up, he would meet her, he would talk to her, reason with her. He would talk to her and hear her deep-throated, vibrant voice, see her brilliant, shining eyes. But, first of all, he would burn her fool letter—if it was a fool letter and not one of the wisest documents ever penned!

He went over to the fireplace and dropped the sheets between two smoldering logs. Then he went back to the desk and took down the receiver from the telephone. A look of dreamy, half-sensuous pleasure began to play across his face as he waited for the number. But when he got the number which he called, the look translated itself into no more ardent expression than: "I'll take the nine-forty-five to Brookvale Junction, and join you on the main-line train for town there. Oh, no, dear child! Ultimatums are out of date. Everything is compromise. Still—still—well, I shall see you then, and we'll talk it over."

He knew that his pose of dawdling indifference, of elderly coolness, made her the more adorably reckless!

II. Edith.

They had pushed back their chairs from the bridge table, Edith Romley, General and Mrs. Carter, and their

companion, Alice Foster. Edith had played very badly and the old general, who had been her partner, did not trouble to mask his annoyance. He was still demanding to know what possible reason she could have had for various plays she had made. Edith had no reason to offer and only a monotonous apology: "I'm so sorry! I'm awfully stupid to-night."

"Do let the dear girl alone, Henry," said Mrs. Carter. "It's only a game, after all. And usually, I'm sure Edith plays brilliantly. It's very good of her to come over like this and cheer up two lonely old people. Don't discourage her by your faultfinding."

"I'm not faultfinding with Edie," answered the old gentleman, falling into the language of years long gone. "But I should like to know if a heart convention means anything at all to her!"

"There's a message for Mrs. Romley," murmured a maid, appearing at the library door.

"For me?"

"Yes'm. Just as Graves was driving the car out of the garage, something happened to the magneto. So he says shall he telephone for a taxi, because neither of the other cars is in the garage?"

"Oh, I'll walk across," said Edith.

"You'll do nothing of the sort. Neither of our cars is out!" General Carter turned toward the maid to give her the direction, but Edith, putting her hand on his arm, stopped him.

"I should like to walk," she said earnestly. "It's a heavenly moonlight night and I shall go across the meadow and in through the break in the hedge. It's still there, isn't it?"

The Carters nodded. The break in the arbor-vitae hedge, which had grown until it was higher now than Edith herself, had been made when she and Charlie Carter and Dorothy Carter had been tiny little things, scarcely taller than the buttercups in the meadow. The

old people saw in their mind's eye the glancing group of little children, bright and light as butterflies, that had glimmered between the two estates in the old days.

If only Edith had fulfilled their wishes and married Charlie! How different life might have been! Charlie would not then have gone off to far places, nursing a wounded love, to experiment in the prevention of tropical diseases until he lost his life. He would have stayed at home and become a distinguished practitioner. And Dorothy—well, probably Edith's failure to fall in love with Charlie did not really account for Dorothy's marriage into the British peerage, and her utter absorption into English life.

"Where are your cars?" grumbled old Carter. "It seems to me that the more cars one has, the oftener one has to do without them. The only safe thing is to have a single rattly one and run it yourself."

"Two of them have gone to the repair shop for something," answered Edith indifferently. "They'll be back in a day or two. It seemed as if the little car would answer our hacking for awhile. No, no! I really don't want any one to walk with me. Please consider that I shall be on either your land or ours every step of the way from here to my own house. I'm not even going out on the highroad. It isn't more than half a mile between the houses, if you take our old short cut. Good night! I'm sorry I was such a bungler at bridge to-night. I'll do better the next time—if you ever ask me again."

"If, indeed!" scoffed Mrs. Carter affectionately. And then, "Give Ira our love, and I hope he'll be rid of his headache by morning."

"I think he will be. A night's rest usually sets him right," answered Edith steadily.

She smiled her even smile upon them,



"Tell me for whom you are looking, and I'll go for you," he said, seriously for him.

lifted the hood of her cloak over her pale brown hair and stepped out through the French window to the terrace. The garden, already half shrouded in straw against the nipping autumn nights, lay below, bathed in moonlight. At its hedge was a stretch of lawn that merged almost imperceptibly into the big meadow that was bounded by the hedge. Beyond the range of her hosts' kind eyes, her pose relaxed, the immobility of her pale face was broken. She glanced back at the house; already the lights were out on that side. She sank upon one of the garden benches,

and let grief and anxiety have their way with her controlled face.

Of course, Ira's headache had been an invention of hers. He had merely refused brusquely, when the moment had come to fulfill the dull engagement made a few days before. He had shrugged his shoulders at her pleas. It was nothing to him, he said, that they were old and lonely—that was the common lot of people who lived long enough, and he did not mean to bore himself. He had an idea that he would like to whip into shape, anyway. He wanted a few hours alone. He didn't want any dinner, so she needn't distress herself over the fact that none had been ordered. He supposed there was something to eat in the house, some fruit and cheese, or something that one of the maids

could bring him if he got hungry? He had obviously rejoiced that she was going to leave the house. Obviously rejoiced!

"I can't stand it forever!" cried Edith, lifting a tense, white face to the moon. "I can't."

Then she fell to wondering what people did who could not "stand" situations. In a case like hers, she supposed, there was the possibility of separation, maybe of divorce. She had never sought to assure herself of the exact extent of Ira's strays. She had shuddered away from certain

knowledge as she shuddered away from noisy scandal, from the blatant confession of failure. Yet, perhaps, that was what Ira wanted. Certainly his affair with that unspeakable, spoiled, rowdy Irwin girl was more serious than all the little fliers in emotion he had taken since their marriage. She had never felt that he desired any more freedom for those affairs than their way of living allowed him. But this was different. He was claiming more freedom!

How wise her mother had been! She had foretold their life almost to a dot. Of course her poor, dear mother had wanted her to marry Charlie Carter, and had used against Ira every argument to which she could lay a singularly shrewd and nimble tongue. He was a writer—an uncertain profession at best, unremunerative and undistinguished. Oh, perhaps there had been a few distinguished writers, but in general their eminence had not been attained until after their death.

Ira was good looking, yes; that she did not deny. But it was a type of good looks which she herself did not admire. He had an effeminate mouth and chin, and the vivid contrast between his black hair and his white forehead, between his black eyebrows and his blue eyes, between his flashing white teeth and his red lips—all these contrasts savored, to the frankly avowed maternal taste, of the cheap chromo. The late Mrs. Masters had spoken with such picturesqueness and incisiveness that Edith had sometimes been forced to see her husband when she looked at a Neapolitan fishing lad and the Neapolitan fishing lad when she looked at him.

Mrs. Masters had also expressed grave doubts of his character. He was a poor young man, not used to handling large sums of money. He would run through Edith's ample income, he would make ducks and drakes of her

fortune. No, he shouldn't, either, because it would be tied up in such a manner that he could not. Mrs. Masters would see to that! But of the money which was Edith's own, direct inheritance from her grandparents, she had no expectation of saving a cent. Dear mother had been mistaken there! Edith felt a little warm glow of pride. Ira had been indifferent to the opportunities of mere spending and quite scrupulously careful not to involve Edith's money in any way. And now, of course, he had an ample income of his own. No, dear mother had been wrong there!

The October chill, striking through the silk and fur of Edith's cloak, set her on her way again through the hedge and up the winding path to her own stately, ugly, expensive home. A sleepy man opened the door for her.

"Do you know whether Mr. Romley is still up, Jenkins?" she asked.

Jenkins thought Mr. Romley had gone out, but he was not sure. Edith controlled even her eyebrows. She nodded as if it were quite to be expected, and went up the softly padded stairs and along the hall to Ira's study at the front of the house, as far as possible removed from any sound from the service end of the establishment. The room was dark. She turned away and went along the hall to his bedroom. The door was open, and the room dark and empty.

Perhaps he had fallen asleep in the study. He had been known to do that. She went back and flooded the room with soft brilliance from a button on the wall. But he was not stretched out upon the big davenport drawn up at right angles to the fireplace. Probably Jenkins had been right. He had gone out. Her lips pressed into a thin line.

She went toward the desk. It was one she had had especially designed and made, after the house had been remodeled, to give the author of the

almost-best sellers a more spacious workshop than half the scholars and scientists in the country boasted. On the big pad she saw that Ira had been writing. Verse. She knew what that meant. She looked down at the lines.

Love passed with a whirl of purple wings.

She did not go on. What was the use? Ira was no poet, and never dropped into rhyme or rhythm except when some new fancy urged him to celebrate new emotion in an unfamiliar medium.

Half sighing, half sneering, she looked around the room. The walls were of paneled wood, except where bookcases usurped them. The chairs were Spanish leather. The books were bound in lovely leather, crimson and blue and gold. Opposite to his big pivoting chair at the desk was another chair. In a foolish dream when she married him she had pictured herself sitting there. She had been quite content to imagine herself *Dora* mending pens for her *David*—however "mending pens" might be rendered in a day subsequent to Dickens.

At any rate, she had hoped to be a quiet, adoring sharer of his mood of inspiration. Well, she never came into the study now except by special invitation, unless on an occasion like this, when he was out of it and the door was open. His secretary, Philip Blake, shared his moods of inspiration, not she. Again she half sneered. She had some respect for Ira's temperamentally incongruous industry, but very little for the public which made it a remunerative one.

She went over to the window, and looked out. The house stood far back from the street. Across the lawns and through the trees she caught the gleam of a passing motor light. Then the white moonlight claimed all the scene for its own. Down the slope to the right it shone upon the absurd, white, little Greek temple her dear father had

erected at the edge of the little artificial lake he had made. The moon was reflected in the still water. Ira often jeered at the temple and lake, as well as at the ugly, expensive house, but she would not change them. Her father and mother had been happy there, had loved each other—and Edith had not been Ira's wife a year before she discovered how difficult of practice the art of love could be.

How had her mother managed? Or was Ira so different from her father? From old General Carter, across the lawns and groves? Or was it that she had not known about either her father or old General Carter or about the real life of women like her mother?

Where was Ira? Oh, she supposed she knew well enough! But how had he reached Montvale, where the Irwin place was, without a car? To reach it by train he would have to go down to the junction and out again on the main line. Though, of course, he could easily enough get a car at the garage.

What was she going to do about it? It was becoming a neighborhood scandal. He had never before put such humiliation upon her. Should she wait for it to wear itself out? Why didn't that terrible young girl have guardians with some sense of propriety? Vaguely, piecemeal, Edith recalled tales of outraged schoolmistresses, of academies almost wrecked by briefly harboring the spoiled, irrepressible young heiress. She remembered a suit which the young person had brought at the age of sixteen to have the court declare her proper yearly allowance twenty-two thousand instead of fifteen.

Well, she would gain nothing by mooning here. Ira would return when it pleased him, and she would, as usual, ask no questions or reproach him. But, at the same time, she supposed her scorn and anger would show. She hoped they would. She wanted them to eat into his consciousness. Or did she?

Did she really want a clarification, a decision?

She switched off the lights and went down the hall to her own room. She had told her maid not to wait up for her. The room was softly lighted, her night things laid out upon her down-turned bed. Everything was in charming order, everything was luxurious. She hated confusion, upheaval, with temperamental emotion; she loved luxury with the instinct born of long habit. She slipped off her cloak and made the inevitable journey of every woman entering her room toward the mirror on her dressing table. As she sat down before it, she saw a note stuck into the corner—a note inscribed in her husband's small handwriting with the single word "Edith."

Her heart beat fast for a second. She did not remember that Ira had ever left a note like that for her before. She tried to break the oppressive, intimidating silence with a laugh. But it sounded strangely cracked. She was acquiring nerves. She evidently thought she was living in one of Ira's almost-best sellers, where absconding husbands and wives so frequently communicated with each other by means of notes stuck into mirrors or pinned to pincushions. Well, she was not the type of his heroines! Her experience would be different.

It was a thick note. Ira had evidently had a good deal to say to her. Her heart seemed to beat in her throat at the thought. Her breath came more unevenly. She caught sight of herself in the mirror. She was very white.

At that instant the telephone on the stand beside her rang. She dropped the letter, almost with an air of relief, and went toward the instrument. She lifted the receiver and said carelessly into the transmitter:

"Yes? Mrs. Romley speaking."

At the message which came to her in return, her face grew even whiter. Her

lips opened spasmodically once or twice, but no sound issued. Then, apparently at the urgency of the voice at the other end of the line, she spoke, though her words were a mere whisper.

"Yes, yes, I'm here. I'm listening. I understand. Go on."

More words, and then she said:

"Yes, yes. I consent. If it is necessary. Absolutely necessary." And then, after another pause, "I will get there as soon as I can. Within an hour, surely."

She put the receiver back upon the hook. She shivered violently, still sitting erect on the edge of the bed. Then she rose, looked stupidly about her with horror-distended eyes, and went across the room to ring for the maid. Then she came back to the dressing table. The unopened letter directed to "Edith" was lying on it. She stared at it, picked it up, balanced it in her hand. Among the silver articles on the dressing table lay a knitting needle. She slid it beneath the sealed flap and slowly tore the envelope open. But, as her fingers inserted themselves to draw out the letter, she suddenly dropped it.

"I don't want to know. I don't want to know!" she cried passionately. "I don't want to know what he said in it—not now, not now, oh, dear God, not now!" She threw it from her into the fireplace, neatly laid for a fire. She had just set fire to it when her maid, sleepy, but a little alarmed, for Edith was usually a considerate mistress, little given to capricious summonses, knocked at the door and entered.

"You rang for me, ma'am?" she said.

Edith turned from the abortive blaze on the hearth, kindling and letter going up together in flame without igniting the heavy log.

"Yes, I did, Maggie. I'm sorry. But—but—I want a bag packed for overnight. And another dress and coat and things to wear now. And see if Graves got the magneto of the small car fixed.

Otherwise I must have a car from somewhere. General Carter will lend me one of theirs. I have to go to Whitestone," she ended dully.

"To Whitestone?" Maggie had been flying to the wardrobe room outside Edith's, and bringing out the things her mistress needed. But she paused to stare at the information.

"Yes. Mr. Romley is in the hospital there. He has been hurt. Hurry, Maggie!"

III. Mona.

As the train from Montvale drew near the junction, the mood of the spectacularly pretty young woman who had boarded it in the company of a lad in the early twenties, became pronouncedly noisy. Their appearance and behavior had not been inconspicuous before. The girl was outrageously pretty, with black eyes and brilliant carmine cheeks and lips.

Beneath her loose heather motor coat, opened and thrown widely back, a low-cut evening dress of black and gold was visible. And when she took her small toque from her head, as she did ten minutes after entering the car, a gold fillet was seen to band her forehead and to keep in place a riot of black curls. Long jade earrings dangled from her ears.

The youth who accompanied her and who was plainly her thrall was scarcely less good looking than she. He was extravagantly tall, rather slim, with the sculptured head of a Greek statue. They talked and laughed loudly together, disdaining, with the arrogance of their class and age, to modulate their voices or to conceal their affairs from the scattered passengers in the car. These, to tell the truth, after their first interested survey of the young couple, generally sank again into their own thoughts or their interrupted drowsing, only rousing themselves occasionally to turn and frown as an unduly loud gust

of laughter roused them from their dull dreams or anxieties.

"I'll wager," the youth exclaimed after a few minutes of exhausted silence, following one particularly noisy sally, "that I'm the only fellow who ever accompanied the girl who had just turned him down on her elopement!"

"Maybe you are," answered the girl indifferently. "You're beginning to believe in it—the elopement—I see. A half hour ago you would have wagered that I wasn't eloping at all."

"Well, I don't half believe it yet. Or, if you're eloping with any one, it's with me. Come, tell the truth, Mona—what are you going to town for at this time of night, and on the q. t.?"

"I've told you. You said you didn't believe me, and I told you to come along and see if I wasn't speaking the truth. You came, and here we are. And we shall see"—she laughed triumphantly up into his face—"what we shall see."

"We shall," he asserted firmly. "And I will bet any one a hundred bones that we shall see your bluff called. Why the dickens should you elope, anyway? There's nobody to prevent your marrying whom you want to marry, and so — It isn't as if you had to please a father and mother or a lot of old cats of aunts."

"There might, you know," she answered, demure, dimpling, highly excited, and repressing the evidences as far as she could, "be objections from his side, considerations there!"

"Gone in for kidnaping, have you? Cradle-snatching? Good Lord, Mona! One never knows what you will do next! Your last violent affair—before the one with me, I mean—was with that doddering old brute of an English actor, wasn't it? About eighty in the shade."

"Cecil Hetheridge? He was not! He was only forty-three. No man is interesting until he is forty or near it!"



"Ira, I've got something hard to say to you."

"And yet you say you're going to run away with some kid so young that his parents and guardians would forbid the marriage, if you gave 'em the chance!" He laughed incredulously. "You're a pretty good actress, Mona, but your stories don't hang together! You've staged your bluff finely, taken a lot of pains with it, but I guess you

and I will be taking the last train back from town to-night, all the same."

"Dear child," said Mona with an insufferable air of patronage, "please remember that it is you and not I who have determined the age of my—of the party of the other part, as it says in those papers the trust company is forever sending me to sign. I didn't say

he was under age or that he had parents! There are, you might remember, other legal ties in the world than those one is born to!"

"Good Lord, Mona! You don't mean——"

"I shan't answer another question. I shan't talk any more."

The conductor entered. He sang the name of the station at which they had pulled up.

"Next station stop Brookvale Junction," he added. "Change there for——" Mona's eyes grew more than ever brilliant, her color intensified. She turned her shoulder toward her companion, who sat in alarmed silence, watching her with dread tempered by incredulity. She peered out into the flying darkness. Her breath came quickly.

The train pulled into the junction. The doors at each end of the car opened and the few stragglers of late suburban travel drifted in. She kept turning her head with quick, birdlike gestures. An elderly lady, a tired father with two sleepy boys whimpering about something, two gum-chewing young sports with hats rakishly askew, a woman who looked like a tired seamstress—one after the other they entered. Mona's fever of excitement mounted, receded. The color ebbed from her face as the doors finally closed again and the train gave its slow preliminary puffs and then settled into its gait.

"Well!" she cried, gasping, outraged, unbelieving. Then she bethought her. There were other cars. She watched for a figure to enter from one of them. Finally she rose.

"I'm going through the train, Tad," she told her companion. Her soft, inviting lips were pressed into a hard, defiant line of red.

"Tell me for whom you are looking, and I'll go for you," he said, seriously for him.

"I'll go myself. You wait here. I don't want any one to go with me."

His eyes were troubled, but he let her go. He felt that if he disobeyed, Mona might, in her mood of that moment, strike him. It had been a good many years since she had done it—ten, perhaps—but he felt that she had not greatly changed from the imperious, spoiled, arrogant child who had met rebellion against her whims with instant blows.

By and by she came back alone. Her eyes were hard. Her lovely, softly suffused color had dwindled into two spots of red, high on the cheek bones. He rose and let her slip into her seat beside the window. For a few moments she kept her head averted and stared out into the blackness. But by and by she turned.

"You win!" she told him briefly. "The elopement's off."

"Thank God!" cried Tad with unaccustomed devoutness.

"Not at all! Thank cowardice—thank poltroonery! Oh, how I hate him!"

"Didn't show up?" queried Tad, careful to keep emotion out of his voice.

"Didn't show up," she repeated affirmatively. "Oh, I wish——"

"Had an eleventh-hour visitation of common sense, did he? Well, Mona, you can scarcely expect me to say I'm sorry, can you?"

"I wish——" she said, narrowing eyes and lips.

"That you could get even? Well, can't you? Here I am, a stand-by always in all your little escapades. What's the matter with pulling off the elopement—an elopement, anyway—as planned? Say, Mona, wouldn't it give Montvale a jolt? After the whole bunch of them has been trying to fill me up with a story of your goings-on with that author fellow down the line ever since I got home from Cambridge

last June! The laugh would be on them, wouldn't it?"

She looked at him somberly for a second. Then the glint of amusement began to sparkle in her eyes.

"And if there *was* anything in the author-fellow stuff," he went on persuasively, not too eagerly, not too personally, "and if he has had the sense to call it off—even a bit roughly, like this—it would be something of a jolt to him, wouldn't it?"

She studied him another full minute before she answered. Then she said:

"I have a trunk of things in at the St. Regis. We'll have to get off, you and I, before we get to New York. The marriage-license bureau there would be closed. We'll be married here—it's a more obliging State about licenses. And then we can go on—we'll take a car. And—and—it *will* be a jolt to—every one, won't it? You're a good old scout to be willing to do it, Tad. But then, if you don't like it, there's always divorce!"

"If I don't like it!" cried Tad.

She looked out the window again. There were angry tears in her black eyes. But the fires of rage and of mischief rapidly dried them.

IV. In the Hospital.

He was out of the ether at last, and she could tell him the truth. She sent the nurse from the room with a little gesture, and she sat down beside him, holding his hand. Curiously enough, he had not lost consciousness at the time of the accident, and it was to his possession of his senses that the surgeons attributed the fact of his escape with his life. He had actually been able to direct the station agent who had picked him up how to make a tourniquet for his leg, and so he had lost comparatively little blood before he had been rushed to the nearest hospital.

He looked inquiringly at his wife.

She was very white—but that was a matter of course! She was a tender-hearted woman, and the accident—He wondered how bad it had been. The pain in his foot was still severe.

"Ira, I've got something hard to say to you."

Surely she wouldn't take a moment like this to reproach him for that note? Why had he been such a fool as to write it? Especially when he had been only half inclined to run off? But it would not be like Edith to do that. Besides, her hand was tender and her gray eyes were bright with tears which were not self-pitiful.

"But you're always a wonderful Stoic. And besides, now—with the experience of the war, and all that——"

"What are you talking about, Edith?"

"Dearest, don't you know? Don't you realize it? They etherized you to examine the extent of your injuries. Well—dearest—they had to operate—to—to amputate——" Her tears were raining upon him now. "Oh, my poor boy!"

"But I feel the pain," he insisted after the first blank, sick second of comprehension.

"Yes. You do. You will for a while. Feel it in the—foot that isn't there. Oh, our bodies are but a little of us! What I tell you is true, dear. But they say—the doctors say—that you will be walking again in six weeks and that in three months you will be so habituated to an artificial foot that you will be able to do everything as you have always done it."

He pushed her tender hand away. He tried to turn from her. She understood. She rose and walked to the window. She would let him have his moment of inundating blackness alone; it had been a long time now since he would have cared for her beside him when he went into deep waters! But in a few minutes he called her back.

"It's all right, Edith," he told her.

His lips were ashen and his face gray. He did not suggest her mother's ancient gibe of the Neapolitan fisher lad to her now. He never would again, she thought. "It's all right. But—but what may not be all right is— Did you find a note from me?"

"Oh, Ira, I am so ashamed! I had it in my hand, all ready to read, when the telephone rang and they called me from the hospital. And—you know how absent-minded I am!—when I got up again I walked over to the fireplace and threw it in, forgetting that I hadn't read it. It was ashes before I remembered. Was it—was it anything very important, dear? Anything you ought to be bothering about, now when rest is so important to you?"

"It—seemed important then. It doesn't now. It"—he rallied his inventive faculties to him and smiled up into his wife's face—"it was about a telephone call from Guthrie, of Guthrie & Kock. They wanted to see me about the next book. I was on my way in to see Guthrie—he was going back to Indianapolis last night."

"Philip Blake will write to him," she answered steadily. "Tell Philip about it." She rejoiced that she had not read the note. If she had known for a certainty its contents, she would never have been able to meet his ready lie with such innocent, kind eyes.

And then, of course, maybe it was not a lie.

V. The Local Papers.

"We regret to chronicle an accident to Mr. Ira Romley, the famous novelist, our fellow citizen of Blue Hills. Mr.

Romley, called to New York late on Thursday night for a consultation with his publisher, changed trains at Brookvale Junction. As travelers by this route will remember, the eastbound tracks are separated from the station proper by a tunnel. The main-line train was, as usual, late. Mr. Romley crossed to the station to inquire about the delay, and while he talked with the agent, the genial Mr. Josley, the train for New York pulled in beside the eastbound platform. Mr. Romley, an athlete and always in the pink of condition, ran through the tunnel, climbed the steps on the eastbound side of the tracks, and came upon the platform just as the train had started to move. He ran after it and almost succeeded in boarding the last car, but slipped and fell. The train proceeded on its way unaware of the calamity it had left behind it."

"An elopement of great interest in the Montvale district, and, indeed, in all Eastern society circles where both the young people are favorites, is that of Miss Mona Irwin and Mr. Thaddeus Hopkins, the famous Harvard halfback of 19—. They were married on Thursday night by the Rev. Abijah Judd, known as the 'marrying parson of—.' Mrs. Hopkins has frequently been reported engaged to many young society men and to various members of the foreign aristocracies, including her present husband. The rumors have always been vigorously denied by the vivacious young society beauty and heiress. Thursday's wedding came as a surprise to many. Mr. and Mrs. Hopkins will travel in the Orient for a year or two."





The Quakeress Vamp

By Marc Edmund Jones

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD C. CASWELL

You never would have dreamed of a Quakeress vamp, would you? She'll interest you in this story that lifts the veil which shrouds in mystery a certain branch of "the movie game."

IT was at the end of the little Quaker stenographer's second week at the plant of the Far Island Motion Picture Company. The youthful manager approached her desk and stood looking down at her.

"How about lunch with me at the island?" he suggested.

Flushing, she transcribed a sentence about "rushing negative stock" as "stuffing negative rock" and answered promptly, though her voice faltered.

"My aunt warned me, Mr.—Mr. Stevens, not to let any one I met at business take me out to lunch."

"That's all right in the city," he laughed, "but out here in Brooklyn it's different!"

"The extra people and the stage hands"—she glanced up at him, as far as his necktie—"all eat downstairs."

"I always take some one with me in the car," he explained. "There's room for two, and I don't like to eat alone. You wouldn't yourself?"

"Well—all right!" she acquiesced.

He took her arm and led her out through the dingy corridor, flanked by dressing rooms, a carpenter shop, and a camera man's laboratory, into the studio yard. As they walked across the

open space between the new lighted studio and the old stages, wooden platforms with cloth "deflectors" to diffuse the sunlight, she became acutely conscious of the conspicuousness of her act.

"M-Mister Stevens! I'd—I'd rather eat downstairs," she begged.

"That's my car there," he announced, pointing to a bright-red racer with sparkling nickeled trimmings. "You've never seen it, have you?"

She shook her head.

"I don't think you've been around the stages, or watched them work, or anything but just sit at your desk in my office and worry your head about your work. You're a quiet little mouse, Ellen!"

A mail coach, of the '49 period, never cleaned since its last trip over the Santa Fé Trail, lay close to the racer on one side. On the other was an automobile of vintage proportionally as old.

"I'm going to make a Western some day," he went on easily. "I'll drive that coach through the wilds of Staten Island, with the heroine in it, until it falls to pieces. And that other relic"—pointing to the ancient auto—"is going into comedy, where it'll be good for a

laugh at every appearance." He chuckled suddenly. "In its own day that machine figured in tragedy rather than comedy. It was responsible for six or seven deaths in the streets of New York City."

"It doesn't look as if it could go fast enough to kill any one," the girl suggested.

"The people who were killed were not in the automobile; they were behind the horses it frightened," he explained, helping her into her seat and showing her how to tuck her skirt so it wouldn't blow.

Then he cranked the car and clambered in beside her. The little machine backed out of the shed, cut-out open, shrouded in a cloud of oily smoke. He had shifted gears when there came an interruption in an undisguisedly indignant feminine voice.

"Oh, I say, Jack! What's the big idea?"

Ellen recognized the speaker instantly. It was Far Island's star, Violet Versailles. On the screen she had long been the little stenographer's ideal of girlish loveliness; in real life she seemed even more beautiful, the absence of the heavy screen make-up bringing out the fineness of her coloring and the delicate modeling of her features.

"Hello, Vi!" said the man uncomfortably. "I thought you were tied up?"

"I made old Cooper hurry through." She scraped a suede pump in the dust of the yard. "Aren't you going to take me to lunch? I'm—I'm famished!"

"Now, Vi," he protested, "you sent around word that Cooper wouldn't finish for an hour and a half, and for me not to wait, and I've invited——" He stopped in sudden recollection. "Meet my new secretary, Miss Bird, whose name is Ellen; and this is Vi, heralded on six-sheets as Violet Versailles. Claims it's her own name, too, by birth and everything!"

The attempt at witticism fell flat.

"Charmed!" There was eighty-ninth-degree-latitude ice in the voice of the star.

"I'm very pleased to——" Ellen extended a hand, but withdrew it suddenly and flushed. Then she turned to Jack. "Listen, Mr. Stevens!"

She started to straighten up, but he pushed her back into the seat.

"Then you're not going to take me to lunch?" Violet returned to the attack.

"We'll make it a party!" he suggested. "There's plenty of room for three. Come on! Hop in, Vi!"

"No, never mind!" She turned away. "I'll shift for myself."

"Don't be foolish, Vi!" he urged.

She faced him suddenly. Little spots of color appeared over her cheek bones. Without warning, she slapped him as hard as she could. Then she hurried away.

Stevens chuckled, slipped in his gears again, and drove through the gate without a backward glance.

Ellen summoned her courage as soon as they were out on the road.

"You see, Mr. Stevens," she began, conviction in her voice, "you shouldn't have asked me to lunch."

"Why?"

"Because—because it has caused a quarrel between you and Miss Versailles. She's—she's terribly angry with you."

"Oh! That's only temperament."

"Temperament? To slap your face?"

"Sure! You see, I've been taking her to meals until she's spoiled. She's our star, but—there's a limit."

"You don't love her, then?"

He turned to look at her quizzically; then decided it was a bona-fide request for information. His reply was fervent.

"Lord, no!"

"She loves you." To the cloistered little Quaker it was the only explanation of the star's display of emotion.

"Nonsense!" For a moment he was uncomfortable. "You are not used to



"Charmed!" There was eighty ninth-degree-latitude ice in the voice of the star.

temperamental people, Ellen. Violet really is a lovely person, but the press agents have been telling her she's a second Helen of Troy and a living replica of Venus de Milo with arms, until she's come to believe it. Why"—he grinned now at recollection of the scene—"she wasn't half so hurt by the fact that I wasn't taking her to lunch as she was to find that you were good to look at yourself, easily as good looking as she."

"Mr. Stevens!" Ellen interrupted hastily. "I'm not pretty at all, and she's beautiful!"

For a second he glanced at her, frowning slightly.

"If you believe that, Ellen," he suggested reflectively, "you ought to look in a mirror just once."

She glanced away.

"Please!" A pause. "My aunt has always warned me not to listen to flattering remarks."

He laughed.

"Your aunt certainly has taken care to be sure you would keep out of trouble in the business world. How on earth did she come to let you work in a picture studio?"

"That," she said, suddenly diffident, "that was on account of you!"

"Of me?" In his surprise he allowed the machine to slow to a crawl. "I don't get you!"

"Well, my aunt, that is, my aunt

Abigail, insisted upon going to the agency with me when I was ready to go to work, and she went through the cards with the proprietress. When she saw your request for a stenographer, she got excited and called me over. 'Look Ellen,' she said. 'This is Jack Stevens, the Jack Stevens who used to live on the next block above us, and this is the company, the Far Island Motion Picture Company, that your aunt Faith read in the Brooklyn paper about his starting.'

"You live on Columbia Heights?" Stevens interrupted.

"Yes," she nodded, "and auntie wouldn't have it any other way but that I come to work for you. She said you used to come over and eat her cake when you were a boy, and—and everything."

"But didn't she realize that a moving picture studio——"

"The proprietress said a movie place was always terribly wicked, but auntie said that anywhere Jack Stevens was would be all right."

"I hope you'll agree with your aunt about me! I—I remember the cake now," he went on hastily, "and the Misses Faith and Abigail Wynn. They were Quakers, and we boys used to laugh at them."

"Yes." She smiled. "I'm a Quaker, too, you know."

"You?" He was rather incredulous for a moment. "I thought a Quaker 'thee'd' and 'thou'd'."

"That's only in speaking to another Quaker." She glanced up into his face. "Beside," she added, "we only 'thee', never 'thou'."

His expression became mischievous.

"Thee isn't sorry now thee is going to lunch with me?"

Her rebuke was very quiet.

"If you are not sorry and if you will not tell me I am—pretty, and if you will not use 'thee' when you are not a Quaker——"

Lunch was at the salad when she turned the conversation from general comparisons to the more vitally fascinating subject of his work.

"How did you happen to start Far Island?"

"It was an accident, just about as much as your coming to work for me."

"Tell me about it."

"Violet Versailles was the beginning. A New Haven capitalist, a Jersey manufacturer, and an export man decided to make pictures. I was working for Preëminent. They offered me a position and commissioned me to sign her up. I kept after her for four weeks, finally landing her at three thousand per. But by that time they had changed their minds."

"They couldn't, could they?" indignantly.

"Yes. I couldn't hold them. However, I thought Violet was too valuable to let go, so I signed the contract myself, intending to dispose of it to some big company and thus pocket a neat little profit. Unfortunately, I couldn't find any one interested in her, even a little bit."

"As popular as she is?" Ellen's voice showed disbelief. "She's won nearly all the contests, and the girls at school are——"

"I know, but this was just after the influenza epidemic. Everybody had been losing money."

"So you started your own company?"

"Exactly! And without a nickel for carfare."

"But you had to have money?"

"Of course! I learned that C. Lang Cooper, the best director in the business, was on the outs with Preëminent because they wouldn't raise him five hundred a week, and I got him to come into Far Island as a partner with me, fifty-fifty and no salary."

"Then——"

"I got the studio from the owners because the sea air had rusted everything

in sight. When I couldn't get a backer or money for operating expenses, I made it a stock company, selling to the public on Violet's reputation."

"And now——"

"The first picture is within two weeks of completion. As soon as we can show it we can raise money, perhaps sell it outright. But expenses for the next few weeks are not in sight."

"You—you may lose out after all you have accomplished?"

He nodded.

"I don't believe it!" she announced positively.

"I hope you're a true prophet," he said gratefully.

As the car entered the yard, upon their return, C. Lang Cooper jumped upon the running board, flinging his portly self upon the amazed man at the wheel.

"Jack! Hurry into the New York office quick! Get pinched for speeding—anything! They're holding a chap who wants to invest money in moving pictures, and he wants to see our place and meet you, and he's got—can you register emotion?—fifty thousand idle dollars with him!"

Pandemonium! It seemed to Ellen that Jack could issue more orders to more different people in the space of a few minutes than was humanly possible. He turned to her the last of all.

"Send for Violet and tell her to be ready to go to supper with a prospect—she understands—and tell her to tell Dolly Curtis to get ready, too!"

Fifty thousand dollars! Ellen repeated the figures over and over in her mind as she returned to her desk. Fifty thousand dollars!

A voice by her side roused her from her reverie.

"Mr. Stevens wished to see me, I believe."

The little secretary looked up at Violet Versailles, somewhat disconcerted.

"Oh, yes! You—you and Dolly Curtis are to go with him to dinner to-night. He said it was a prospect, and that you would understand."

"I see," said Violet icily. "It's a wonder he wouldn't use you to vamp his prospects now!"

"I?" Ellen's eyes widened. "To vamp his prospects? I—I don't understand."

"You don't?" The star sat on a corner of the table. "Since you are so gloriously innocent, I'll explain a few things to you. Whenever Jack has a prospective investor of any consequence he brings him out to show him the plant, and then, of course, takes him for dinner and entertains him during the evening. I, being a good fellow and everything, am supposed to trot along and help charm the man."

"But—shouldn't you do that, for your own company?"

"Of course not! My contract calls for acting in pictures, not entertaining boobs."

"Isn't it a pleasure to go out to dinner, and everything?"

The star stood up.

"You have no idea at all, have you, of what it means to vamp a man, or be extraordinarily nice to him?"

"I—uh, no!"

"You'll find out for yourself now! I'm certainly not going to-night, so you can go in my place. I'll tell Dolly to get ready. Old Mrs. Dennis in the wardrobe room can manage to fix you up somehow."

Violet Versailles slammed the door behind her as she went out.

Jack, highly elated at the results of his initial presentation of Far Island's affairs, arrived with the capitalist toward the close of the afternoon. Mr. Jeremiah A. Pressby was an elderly, incredibly fussy little fellow with soft-toed shoes. He rose in the car as Jack drove in, to exclaim:

"So *this* is Far Island!"



"Kiss me," he demanded. "I must have a kiss!"

Cooper was at work in a huge multiple set in the inclosed studio. There was a certain impressiveness in the massive library, the paneled dining room beyond, the hall with its sweeping staircase painted in imitation marble. Violet, in low-cut evening gown, was at her best.

Jack brought Pressby to a vantage spot by the camera. After the taking of the scene, Cooper, the star, the

camera man, and some of the players were presented to the little man, but there proved to be but one interest—Violet! He took the first chance to go to her side, stepping away from the others.

"You are the most beautiful woman I ever saw!" he told her.

She yawned, fingering the button of his fancy waistcoat.

"If you can't think of anything more

interesting than that, old dear"—she shrugged her shoulders—"I think I'll go change my clothes."

He watched her out of the studio, crestfallen. Jack hurried over.

"Gad, what a woman!" Pressby exclaimed. "But," he added quickly, forcing a smile "to business! I must question your director."

"Did you tell Violet and Dolly to be ready, Ellen?" questioned Jack in the office.

"Vi—Miss Versailles said she wouldn't go, but that she would tell Dolly Curtis."

"What the——" But he checked himself and laughed. "I'll go get her."

He returned shortly, followed by a sleepy-looking peroxide blonde wrapped and held together somehow in a ragged kimono.

"This is Dolly," he announced.

Dolly extended a languid hand, stifling a yawn.

Jack was gleeful.

"You're of a size, all right!"

"Is—is Miss Versailles going?" Ellen asked.

"Nope! You and Dolly are the party and she's going to fix you up with some of her clothes, and—run along now and get ready."

"But——"

"No 'buts'! You can phone home, and all you have to do is eat a fine dinner, talk a little, and look beau——" He caught himself, and added, "nice."

Dolly took her by the arm.

"Come along, kidlet!" she directed.

To Ellen's surprise the ingénue's room was as neat as its mistress was slatternly.

"Off with your duds!" Dolly directed, kicking the door shut. "Down to the skin," she added. "It's lucky I've some extra things washed up." She began to rummage through the tray of her trunk.

Ellen slowly colored, standing motionless in the middle of the floor. "I

—I never undressed before any one in my life!" she protested. "And"—with a glance—"the door isn't locked, either!"

Dolly straightened, laughing.

"Forget it! This is a grown-up world, and virtue doesn't depend on clothes and Yale locks." She looked at the bashful visitor. "Shades of David Griffith!" she ejaculated, after a moment. "Where on Eighth Avenue did you ever succeed in buying things like these?"

After an hour's work, Ellen looked at herself in the glass.

"You're prettier than Violet herself," affirmed Dolly, "but damme, if you hadn't done your best to camouflage!"

Ellen turned to the other with a sudden sobering thought.

"What does it mean, Miss Curtis, to vamp a man?"

"Oh," laughing, "trying to attract him in every way; getting him to want to make violent love to you; setting him on his ear generally. It's a broad word, kiddie! Why do you ask?"

"Oh—nothing!" Ellen looked at herself in the glass and blushed.

The studio limousine was ready in the yard. Jack and Pressby were waiting impatiently as the two girls hurried out. Pressby showed open admiration as he was introduced to Dolly. He forgot her immediately when Ellen was presented. His fascination for the little Quaker was so palpable as to be comic. She drew her cloak around her more closely, yielding to panicky impulses within. Jack, suddenly proud of her, pinched Dolly's arm.

They dined at an inn out on Pelham Road, which had long been a favorite of Jack's. The meal, ordered ahead by telephone, was served perfectly, and the whole to Ellen was an experience beyond anything she had ever imagined.

Pressby, seated at her left, leaned over at the first opportunity.

"You are the most beautiful woman I ever saw!" he assured her.

She flushed.

"Isn't it wonderful here!" she exclaimed, to change the subject.

He rose.

"Shall we dance?"

She looked up in surprise, but the spirit of her surroundings had captured her and she rose also. Thanks to her girl friends, Ellen could dance a little. The surprising Jeremiah A. Pressby proved to be a wonder. Unused to the exertion, she tired long before the others and finally had to plead fatigue.

"I'm tired—and hot!" She was hardly able to keep her eyes open. "Can't we sit and talk for a while?"

"It'll be fine and cool on the porch," he suggested. "We can go out and look at the moon."

He found a corner with two chairs and made her comfortable with some cushions. For a while they were silent. Then the man leaned over and sought her hand.

"You know," he said, "I like you!"

She started to draw away, then remembered Jack. And there flashed into her mind the words of Violet. He was a prospect and must be vamped.

"I—I like you!" she murmured tremblingly.

He waited for no more. His moist hands rested clammily upon her bare arms, pinioning her in the chair. His breath was hot upon her face.

"Kiss me!" he demanded. "I must have a kiss!"

Over her came a sudden wave of revulsion. It was all a mistake. She couldn't, not even to save Far Island.

"No, no!" she exclaimed, breaking his grasp and rising. "I have never kissed a man, Mr. Pressby. I couldn't, even to get you to put your money in the company."

Suddenly there was a step and Jack appeared, followed by Dolly. Pressby backed away from her, confused. She rushed to Jack.

"What's the matter?" he asked. He felt her tremble.

Pressby collected himself, desperately seeking to save his face.

"I've just told Miss Bird of my decision to invest my money in your company, and that you should have your check to-morrow. She—she was glad to hear it."

It was only when the car was near her home in Brooklyn that Ellen confessed what had happened.

"Who told you you had to make a baby vampire out of yourself?" Jack asked when she had finished.

"Violet!"

"I thought so!" He paused. "You need a guardian, little Quaker. That or—maybe a husband would be better!"

She looked up suddenly.

"If thee thinks that is best——" she began, but stopped. She had to.



FOR ADVENTURERS

ALL those who go adventuring,
 May Fate to them great treasure bring;
 All men who take strange roads and seas,
 May Providence be kind to these.
 May bension and blessing be
 Upon that goodly company!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



In Confidence

**HOW many windows have you in your house?
And what can you see from them?**

¶ No. We don't mean the cottage, apartment, or city house. That's where people think you live. Where the real *you* actually lives is in a habitation built by your thoughts, your ambitions, your aspirations, your dreams. Has it many windows or is it a dark little cell?

¶ If life means nothing but the daily task, the daily coming and going, the immediate routine and the rest which follows it, you are living in the dark and are only half awake.

¶ Sometimes some great primal thing like love tears down the walls of the house and lets in the glory of heaven and earth. And too often the poor little prisoner is blinded by the light and only troubled by the vision that has come to it. Is it not better to have windows in your house?

¶ The windows, out of which you may look and see the beauty that is there for every one, are the spiritual and mental interests that lift you out of yourself and give you a glimpse of the real meaning of life. For most of us, reading is the readiest key to unlock the "charmed, magic casement."

¶ The greatest novel by the greatest woman writer of romantic fiction since Ouida, starts in the next number of SMITH'S.

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Q "The Lamp of Destiny," her latest and greatest story, will run in this magazine in large installments. We want you to read it. Please, in order that you may be sure of getting a copy, order the next number of SMITH'S from the news dealer now.

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Q There are other windows offered you by the next number of SMITH'S—a collection of the greatest short stories of the month, written by the greatest writers of the day.

Q Arthur Crabb, Winona Godfrey, Helen Nowell Brooks, Katharine Haviland Taylor, Michael Gross, and Clara Frances McIntyre have all helped to make the next issue of SMITH'S the best woman's fiction magazine published. Owing to the paper shortage and to distribution difficulties, it may be hard to get the December SMITH'S unless you order from the news dealer in advance. Better order *your* copy now.

THE EDITORS OF SMITH'S.



Major Fair reviews her unit, whose members have not forgotten how to "snap out of it."

New York Stage Successes

"The Famous Mrs. Fair"

By James Forbes

THE Great War and its aftermath are not too far behind us to make the own personal reconstruction problem of Mrs. Fair—beg pardon, Major Fair—who comes home after four years of war work with the French army, a very interesting matter indeed. The family has progressed considerably in her absence. There is Sylvia, who has reached the mature age of eighteen, and who fully realizes that she will be a big surprise to her mother. "Four years makes a lot of difference in a woman," as she weightily remarks. Then there is her brother Alan, who

was himself a captain in the A. E. F. He has fallen in love with his buddy's sister Peggy since coming home, and has become engaged. Jeffrey Fair, the husband and father, whose war career in the quartermaster's department at Washington was tame beside that of his wife, is not quite prepared to be the husband of the celebrity Nancy has become.

But they are all overjoyed to see her again, and the homecoming is all that she could have anticipated. Her unit, a quintet of Sam Browne-belted, French-blue-uniformed women, who preceded

By Courtesy of the Authors and the Producers.



Jeffrey Fair (Henry Miller) and his daughter, Syteia (Margalo Gilmore), became great chums while her mother was in France.

their major home, come to see her and each contributes from her experience an opinion on how hard it is to get back into the humdrum grind of civil life after the exciting days of war.

There is also another caller, a neighbor, Mrs. Brice, who has been terribly sweet to Sylvia and her father, especially her father, during Nancy's absence. As she goes out, after a cordial invitation from Nancy to come again very soon, she waves good-by to Mr. Fair with "By-by, Jeffie!"

NANCY (looking at JEFFREY): "Jeffie!" Darling, have you been carrying on a little bit?

FAIR: Certainly not. Damn it all, you never can find a match in this house!

NANCY (looking about happily): Well, Alan, some swell dug-out!

SYLVIA: Mother, when you were given the Croix de Guerre, did the general kiss you on both cheeks?

NANCY: Ask me some other time, darling; your father is listening.

FAIR: If he didn't he was a poor fish! (NANCY blows him a kiss.)

NANCY: Now, Sylvia, tell me all the news, and I wouldn't mind a little gossip. Who's been divorced?

SYLVIA: Not a soul.

ALAN: Yes, this war has done that for the country. Fighting in France has given a lot of husbands a rest from battles at home.

FAIR: Old stuff, Alan. Oh, possibly gave the wives a rest, too.

NANCY: Thank you, Jeffrey. Sylvia, no matter how many

times you marry, always select a gentleman like your father. Who is this Angy Brice?

ALAN: Oh, mother, just as we were all happy!

SYLVIA: Why, I wrote you about her.

NANCY: Yes, darling, I know your Mrs. Brice. I want to know Jeff's Mrs. Brice.

FAIR: She's not my Mrs. Brice.

NANCY: Why, Jeffrey, don't you want to tell me about your little playmate?

FAIR: Of course. She's a little widow who lives next door. She's a charming woman.

NANCY: Uhhh.

What looks like a possible rift in an otherwise tuneful lute is forgotten for the moment when a maid reports that Mr. Gillette has just telephoned about the contract he left with Alan for Mrs.

Fair. She is interested at once, and Alan is obliged to bring it forth, although reluctantly. It is a contract for a cross-country lecture tour, and the rest of the family shriek with laughter at the idea of mother lecturing. Not so the famous Mrs. Fair. In the first place, the thirty thousand dollars offered is alluring. She considers what a lot of reconstruction could be done with it. The trip, too, is tempting. "I've never been to California," she muses, but postpones decision.

ALAN (*alone with JEFFREY*): Say, dad, do you mind if I say something to you?

FAIR: If you have some advice up your sleeve, shake it out. You've seen things. You're not a kid any longer. You fought for me. It seems to me that gives you the right to speak your mind.

ALAN: Mother made a whale of a hit in France. You've got to heel yourself for the day when mother takes a look around and says: "France was never like this." And when that cold, gray morning arrives, don't be too busy to make life very damned interesting for mother.

FAIR: That's a pretty tall order for a man without any gold lace on his chest, but I'll do my damndest.

ALAN: And if I see the symptoms coming, having been through it myself, I'll give you the high sign.

It is while the members of the unit are reminiscing with their chief about the glorious days in France that the newspaper reporters come for interviews and photographs of the major. Jeffrey doesn't fancy the idea of his wife having her picture in the paper but, as Alan reminds him, "That's not your wife, dad, that's Major Fair."

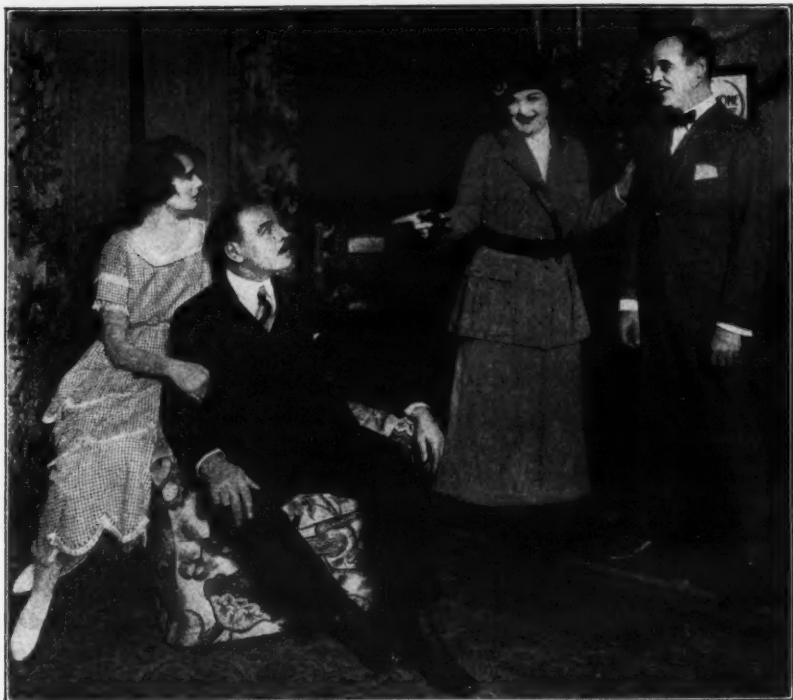
The pictures and interviews, as well as the reports of her first lecture, come out beautifully, which taste of publicity

makes Nancy the more willing to listen to Mr. Gillette, who has come to urge her to sign the contract. He is backed up by members of the unit with such remarks as "Go on, Nancy, be a sport," and "Now, Nancy, you're not going to refuse this great opportunity. Think what we could do with the money!"

NANCY: I can't make up my mind. I don't believe Jeff would approve, and unless he did I wouldn't want to go.



Major Fair (Blanche Bates) is warmly welcomed by her husband, whose own war career was not a bit thrilling.



Sylvia (Margalo Gillmore)

Jeffrey Fair (Henry Miller)

Nancy Fair (Blanche Bates)

Alan Fair (Jack Devereaux)

NANCY: He's fat, positively fat! Alan, we'll have to take him in hand. You know, fifty times before breakfast.

MRS. WELLS: Wasn't he very proud of your success last night?

NANCY: If he was, he concealed it most carefully.

MRS. BROWN: Hasn't he congratulated you?

NANCY: Not a congrat. Kinda took the joy out of it.

MRS. CONVERSE: Don't let that worry you, Nancy. A husband hates to admit that his wife can do anything.

MRS. WELLS: He's likely making himself a bore at the club, bragging about you.

NANCY: Do you think so? But if I went, what about Sylvia?

MRS. WYNNE: Why not take her?

NANCY: I don't believe she'd want to leave her father. And I don't know that I'd be happy, thinking of Jeff here alone again.

Jeffrey and Alan had expected Nancy and Sylvia to lunch with them, and want to know why they didn't show up.

SYLVIA: Mr. Gillette came and we couldn't.

ALAN: Is that pest here?

SYLVIA (indignantly): Dudley's not a pest. He's charming.

ALAN: Since when Dudley?

Sylvia: I can't go on calling a man I've seen almost every day for a month Mr. Gillette, can I, daddy?

ALAN: Don't let me catch you flirting with him.

SYLVIA: Why, I don't know how!

FAIR: Alan, don't talk such damn nonsense. Where's your mother?

SYLVIA: In the garden, being photographed.

ALAN: What's the idea this time?

SYLVIA: It's for a magazine article showing her domestic side.

FAIR: I hope the camera can find it. (*He looks out on the terrace and sees the women of NANCY's unit.*) Gosh, I'd like to come into

this place just once and not find that bunch of women here! A man would have more privacy in the Grand Central depot.

ALAN: You said it. Whenever mother is at home this house looks like a clubwoman's old-home week.

FAIR: Wouldn't you think, after four years together, they'd be tired of each other?

ALAN: And the line of flattery they hand out—and mother lapping it up like a cat does cream!

FAIR: I know. Even a woman as level-headed as your mother will soon believe she's the greatest thing in the world. She's booked up a month ahead—banquets, receptions, although I thought she had been given one by everybody from the mayor down to the conductorettes' union. She hasn't rested a day since she arrived.

ALAN: It's a wonder to me that she hasn't had a nervous breakdown.

FAIR: Son, the only thing that makes a woman have a nervous breakdown nowadays is having to stay at home. (*The noise of laughter comes from the garden.*) Listen to that cackle. What are they doing?

ALAN: They're leaving.

FAIR: What's Sylvia doing?

ALAN: Standing there adoring mother as usual. She doesn't even see that mother is neglecting her. Why she can't settle down and devote herself to Sylvia—

FAIR: She would if it weren't for those women and that damn' Gillette. He'll have her signed, sealed, and delivered—

ALAN: Why don't you tie a can to him?

FAIR: How? By forbidding him to come here? My boy, I haven't lived with your mother all these years without realizing that if you want her to do something, tell her she can't.

Angy Brice enters at this point and congratulates Jeffrey in her sweet way on being the husband of a celebrity. "It isn't as though Mrs. Fair were a homebody like me, just content to make a man comfortable and happy. You can't expect any one so brilliant not to get bored with her home and her family. Not that I'm insinuating that she is." To which Alan, who understands Angy perhaps better than his father does, replies, "Oh, no."

The sort of talk that Mrs. Brice gives out is not designed to make a man in Jeffrey's position, already uncomfortable and rebellious over his wife's evi-

dent liking for the limelight, any happier—or wiser. When Nancy suggests that he accompany her to the clubhouse, where Mr. Gillette is to photograph her again, he replies, "Absurd idea!"

NANCY: Why, what's absurd about it? You and Alan were photographed in the father-and-son tournament.

FAIR: That's different. I'm guyed by the crowd as it is. I can't pick up a magazine at the club without some one asking me if I'm looking for the "major's" picture. I can't come into this house without falling over a camera, or finding some interviewer smoking my best cigars.

NANCY: I'm sorry. I don't know quite how I would explain to Mr. Gillette and the girls that you object—

FAIR: Don't let me embarrass you. If you want to go on making yourself and your family ridiculous, don't let me stop you.

NANCY (*hurt*): Jeff! I didn't think—

FAIR: No. You never think about anybody but yourself— (*NANCY goes out quickly.*)

Sylvia has invited Peggy to tea to meet the family. Gillette is there when she comes and, on being introduced, they evidently recognize each other. Peggy at once recalls the circumstance. It was at a War Relief Bazaar, one about which there was an unpleasant scandal. Gillette says he was not in New York at the time, and quite naturally Peggy does not contradict him.

It is disappointing that Mrs. Fair has to rush off to the club for more photographs, but she makes her excuses charmingly and promises to be right back. She doesn't know about her son's engagement, and neither does Mr. Fair, but the latter surprises a love scene and has to be let into the secret. He takes the surprise well enough, but Peggy, who, as a matter of fact, is a stenographer and socially not of the Fair set, feels it incumbent upon her to explain to her future father-in-law that, while she is poor and a working girl, she truly loves his son and is not marrying him for money or social position. Alan has been sent out of the room during this interview, but is recalled to receive his fa-



After demobilization Major Fair starts in
"to buy all the clothes in New York."

ther's congratulations. The little stenographer has made a decidedly good impression on the millionaire whose daughter she is to be, and the matter is sealed with kisses all around. But to Mrs. Fair the news comes as a shock.

NANCY: You see, Miss Gibbs, I haven't been long. Oh, you haven't had tea? Sylvia, run along and get some. I must phone the Colony Club right away.

FAIR: Can't that wait?

NANCY: It's very important.

FAIR: More important than to pay some attention to the girl your son is going to marry? (NANCY is taken aback. She looks at FAIR, dazed, then slowly turns her regard upon PEGGY, then on ALAN.)

NANCY: Alan, how long have you been engaged?

ALAN: The day before you came home.

NANCY: A month ago! Why didn't you tell me?

PEGGY: I'm to blame, Mrs. Fair. I didn't want Alan to tell you because I feared it might distress you and spoil your homecoming.

ALAN: Peggy's afraid that because she's a stenographer—you—

NANCY (interrupting): What right had Miss Gibbs to judge how I would receive the news of my son's engagement?

PEGGY: I can see how what I did might be misjudged, but, really, my motives—

FAIR: I can vouch for Peggy.

ALAN: Thank you, dad, but no need to vouch for her. The fact that I am going to marry her, that Sylvia loves her, and that you approve should be enough for mother. (NANCY flinches at this speech, but says nothing, simply looks at ALAN.)

PEGGY: Mrs. Fair, I know what you are thinking, feeling. It is much better that I should go. (And she does go, after what must have been a rather trying afternoon with her in-laws-to-be.)

FAIR (alone with NANCY): You've made a nice mess of things. If you hadn't been so keen on publicity, all this needn't have happened.

NANCY: Do you suppose if I had been told why Miss Gibbs was coming here that I would have allowed a stupid photograph to interfere? Isn't Alan's engagement something that could have been told me without shocking me, bewildering me, so that— Oh, you've made me seem ungracious to my boy! It was wicked, cruel of you.

FAIR: How did I know you were to take it like this?

NANCY: And did you welcome her with outstretched arms at once?

FAIR: Frankly, I was surprised, but after I had had a talk with her—

NANCY: Exactly. You had an opportunity to judge of her before you gave your approval, but I am expected to give at once the son I've loved, watched over, prayed for, to a girl of whom I know nothing.

FAIR: I told you I vouched for her.

NANCY: He's my son, too.

FAIR: That's ' jealousy talking.

NANCY: Is it strange that I should be jealous? Isn't it hard for any mother, just at first, to give her son to another woman? If Alan had had any right feeling for me, he would have told me tenderly, tactfully, that he loved some one else more than me. Instead, he let you thrust the fact at me. I don't know what I have ever done that he should have told you, even Sylvia, before me; made me feel like an outsider.

FAIR: Who is to blame for that? You put yourself outside your home. You can't hope to receive Alan's confidence if you are never here to get it. You can't go on neglecting your family—

NANCY: What? I give up everybody and everything belonging to me and endure privations, horrors, because I think it's my greatest duty—and then I am neglecting my family! My family seems to have gotten along very well without me, and ever since I came home you and Alan have resented everything I've done.

FAIR: We don't approve of what you've been doing.

NANCY: Approve! Must I secure the approval of my husband and my son for what I think best to do?



Mrs. FAIR: Alan, you look simply scrumptious!

FAIR: Your desire to appear in public, for instance.

NANCY: If you had been overseas and had been urged to appear in public, would you have had to ask my approval? No. It would have been the perfectly natural thing for you to do.

FAIR: It's not the same thing.

NANCY: Because I'm a woman. Well, this war has settled one thing definitely. A wom-

an's work counts for just as much as a man's, and she is entitled to all the rewards it brings.

FAIR: You've done your duty by your country, but, by Heaven, you're capitalizing it!

NANCY: Jeffrey!

FAIR: Ever since you've been home you've thought of everything but your duty to your family. All you think of is your appearance at public functions, getting your name and photograph in print. Can you deny that you are eager to sign this contract so that you can

make a triumphant tour of the country telling the great American public how you helped win the war? (*Angrily*) Well, you'll put an end to all this publicity! You'll stop all these ridiculous lectures. You'll tear up that contract. You'll give up this tour and remain here, where you belong.

NANCY (*with forced and ominous calm*): And why must I do all this? Why must I remain here, where I belong?

FAIR: Because I am your husband, and I forbid you to go.

(*He turns away. NANCY watches him for a few seconds. Then she goes around the tables, sits, and deliberately signs the contract, rises, and glares defiantly at JEFFREY, who has turned to face her at the sound of the pen scratching.*)

After this stormy clash of wills, Mrs. Fair goes on a very successful cross-country lecture tour. She returns to find her family living in a hotel in the city. Sylvia, who accompanied her mother on tour for a month, was bored and came home, where Gillette and his gay crowd have been making life very pleasant for her. Alan finds fault with Sylvia for letting a previous engagement interfere with being at home when her mother arrives.

ALAN: Considering she hasn't seen her mother for two months, and that this is her first night at home, it's very selfish of Sylvia not to give up one party.

FAIR: Sylvia's had to make her life without her mother and can't be expected to drop everything whenever she chances to appear on the



Mrs. Brice is "some fast worker with the harpoon." Here she hopes that *Major Fair's* newspaper photographs are a success. "I wish somebody wanted to take mine. It must be lovely to be notorious."



ANGY (Virginia Hammond): May I borrow your nice husband to help me with some stupid business things?

NANCY: If you'll be sure to return him.

scene. You've shown a disposition, of late, to criticize your sister, and I don't like it.

ALAN: Don't let's scrap about Sylvia. I'm sorry if I have seemed unkind. But you know, dad, you are *spoiling* her.

FAIR: Oh, hell, why not? A man's got to have some woman to spoil. Sylvia's sweet and loving to me. I was mighty glad to have her home again.

ALAN: Now that mother's home, I suppose you'll go back to the country.

FAIR: She's going on another tour.

ALAN: I'm disappointed. Damn Gillette!

FAIR: He's not a bad sort when you get to know him. I no longer hold him responsible for your mother's going lecturing. If it hadn't been he, it would have been some other manager.

ALAN: Gillette's around here a good deal.

FAIR: Yes. I wouldn't deprive Sylvia of seeing a man who knows a damn' sight better what her mother's doing than I do.

Alan and Peggy have married during Mrs. Fair's absence, and her first act on coming home is to "make up" with them the slight breach caused by the

surprise of their engagement. This home-coming is a contrast to the first when everything was so right. Being "on the outs" with Alan has almost "made an old woman of her;" Jeffrey is not the devoted husband who welcomed her from overseas, and Sylvia— The mother's first remark on seeing her daughter is a horrified "Oh, what have you done to her?" For Sylvia has gone through a metamorphosis from the charming girl we knew in the first act and become an example of the flippant, vulgarized, Broadway chorus-girl type. She barely greets her mother. She is petulant over the nonarrival of a new hat.

SYLVIA: Isn't that the limit! I gave it to the clerk myself. I'll just ask him, "What's the idea?" Oh, the darn thing came at last! I was going to wear this to-night. (*She tries on the smart, daring creation and poses before the mirror.*) Isn't that a sweetie? I

got it at Francine's. She makes for all the smart chorus girls. How do I look?

ALAN: Just like a movie cutie.

NANCY: Alan!

SYLVIA: Oh, mother, don't mind Alan. He's always knocking my taste in clothes.

After Alan says good night, Sylvia and her mother have "a nice, snuggly time," and Nancy hears a partial explanation of the change in her daughter—a story of loneliness and "Gillie."

SYLVIA: Daddy's a darling, but he's old. Gillie's been my life-saver.

NANCY: Who is Gillie?

SYLVIA: Mr. Gillette! He took me to tea one day at a dancing place and introduced me to his friends, and when he found I liked them he said: "Sylvia, this old town is yours. We'll take it all apart and see what makes it tick."

NANCY (*becoming enlightened*): That doesn't sound like Mr. Gillette.

SYLVIA: Oh, he puts on his grand manners with you! You don't know the real Gillie.

NANCY: No, I don't believe I do. Who chaperones you?

SYLVIA: A woman pal of Dudley's.

NANCY: Is she a married woman?

SYLVIA: Is she? Three times. (*It doesn't take NANCY long to see that she has a problem in SYLVIA, one that will take all her cleverness and tact to handle.*)

NANCY: Is Mr. Gillette always your escort at these parties?

SYLVIA: He's my gentleman friend.

NANCY: He doesn't make love to you?

SYLVIA: No—but I guess he'd like to.

NANCY: Darling, you mustn't say such things. Nice girls don't, and they don't go to the places you've been going, and they don't use rouge or wear hats from Francine's.

SYLVIA: All the women in my crowd do.

NANCY: Then I think you're going with the wrong crowd.

SYLVIA (*heatedly*): How do you know? You've never seen any of them. They may not belong, but they know how to be kind. Daddy's the only one who never finds fault with me. He's the only one that loves me, really. (*A phone call from Mr. GILLETTE, who is coming to talk business, interrupts the conversation.*) I want to talk with him, too. But I hadn't better butt in on your party. I've a message from the bunch.

NANCY: Can't you give it to Mr. Gillette now?

SYLVIA (*pertly*): Any objection to my seeing him alone?

NANCY: Why, none at all, dear. I'll let you know as soon as we have finished.

SYLVIA (*smartly, as GILLETTE enters*): Well, mother, when you're through with Gillie have them page me in the lounge. I'll go down and hear a little jazz.

NANCY: No, Sylvia, you'll wait in my room, please. (*Angrily SYLVIA obeys.*)

Nancy proceeds to administer the first shock to Gillette by refusing, under any considerations, to sign a contract for another tour. Persuasion and tempting offers are of no avail. "The famous Mrs. Fair" has made up her mind that she is going on no more lecture tours. There is about fifteen thousand dollars due her, which Gillette agrees to pay in a few days. Nancy ends the interview on the same firm, calm note by asking him to say good-by to Sylvia when she sends her in. This is the second shock, and Gillette receives it with less grace than the first.

NANCY: Sylvia has been telling me of your kindness to her. I don't wish to seem ungrateful, but I would rather you did not see her again, at least, for the present.

GILLETTE: Are you insinuating that I am not good enough to associate with your daughter?

NANCY: I never insinuate, Mr. Gillette. If I must speak more plainly, I will; and I hope you will not resent it. Sylvia's story of her friendship with you has made me realize that you and I have rather different standards as to the sort of associates and amusements that are suitable for a girl of her age and upbringing.

GILLETTE: She enjoyed them.

NANCY: Possibly. But I am sure she will like much more the ones I intend to provide for her from now on.

She leaves him with a simple "Good night, Mr. Gillette," and sends Sylvia in to deliver her message "from the bunch." The message is never delivered. Gillette is not interested. Her exuberant beginning, "Oh, Gillie, the bunch said to tell you—" is interrupted by "Oh, hang the bunch," and all the yellow cad in Gillette is on the surface. The chagrin he dared not reveal to Mrs. Fair comes out in the cruel brutality of his speech.

SYLVIA: Did mother say something unkind to you?

GILLETTE: Did she? She spoke plainly and hoped I wouldn't resent it. Me, doing all I could to keep you from being lonely! A lot of thanks I got. Told me I wasn't good enough to associate with you. Well, if she objects to me, what's she going to say about your father and Angy Brice?

SYLVIA: Dudley! What do you mean?

GILLETTE: The minute your mother's wise, she'll get a divorce.

SYLVIA: Divorce?

suade the overwrought, high-strung girl to run away with him to Montreal. She goes down to the lounge where he agrees to meet her in a moment. Nancy comes in and asks for Sylvia, but Gillette has a ready lie: "I've said good-by to her. She's gone to her room. Good night, Mrs. Fair." Before she has a chance to discover the falsity of this assurance the telephone rings—it is Angy Brice asking for Jeffrey, even though he has just



Major Fair and her unit, back in "civies," plan to use the \$30,000 income from her lecture tour in reconstructing slums in this country.

GILLETTE: Why, you poor kid, aren't you on to your father and Angy Brice? Everybody else in town is.

SYLVIA: Oh, I never thought my daddy would go back on me.

GILLETTE: Your whole family's gone back on you. That selfish brother of yours having no time for anybody but his wife. Your mother leaving you alone for years at a stretch, and your father running around with Angy Brice. A lot they care for you!

SYLVIA: Nobody wants me.

GILLETTE: I want you. I'm the only one that cares anything about you, and I've been ordered to say good-by to you!

It is not so hard to bully and per-

left her house—and Jeffrey himself comes in. Nancy gives him the message.

FAIR: Oh, all right. Sylvia home?

NANCY: Yes. She is in her room. Jeffrey, I hardly know how to say it. I understand about Mrs. Brice—but did it ever occur to you that other people mightn't? The worst of these platonic friendships is that people will talk. Frankly, do you think it courteous to go see Mrs. Brice a few hours after my arrival?

FAIR: You were busy with your own affairs as usual.

NANCY: I have some pride. I was very

glad to have the excuse of letters so that I need not prolong your boredom at dinner.

FAIR: I wasn't bored. Sorry if you were. I thought I was very entertaining. You'll have to make allowances for me. I haven't had the advantage of mingling with the mighty minds of two continents.

NANCY: I'd like you to be serious.

FAIR: Oh, haven't we been? I think being told by your wife that you are a bore is fairly serious. Still, if there is more, let's have it.

NANCY (after a moment's pause): Jeffrey, long ago we decided that if either of us came to the conclusion that our marriage had been a mistake—

FAIR: I haven't said so.

NANCY: Words aren't necessary. Actions sometimes—

FAIR: When it comes to actions—I haven't forsaken my bed and board.

NANCY: We needn't go into that.

FAIR: Pardon me, but that is the crux of the whole affair.

NANCY: Oh, no, Jeffrey! Your attentions to Mrs. Brice are the crux of the affair.

FAIR: What right have you to object to anything I do?

NANCY: My right as your wife.

FAIR: Haven't you forfeited that right? If you prefer the public to your husband, you mustn't kick at the price you have to pay.

NANCY (slowly): Meaning that I am not to protest if you choose to make me conspicuous by your attentions to that woman? Really, this is delicious. (She laughs sarcastically.)

FAIR: Are you paying me the compliment of being jealous of me?

NANCY: Jealous of a man who doesn't want me?

FAIR: Oh, Nancy, you know damn' well I want you! You may not be jealous of me, but I am of you and everything that concerns you. I'm jealous of your career because it took you away from me. I tried to live up to my agreement. Hadn't I the right to expect that you'd live up to it, too? If it was my job to provide the home, wasn't it your job to take care of it? Had you the right—be honest, Nancy—to go on this tour? You can't be married and be a free agent without making some one suffer. I am so damn' sick of my life—as I'm living it now. But I don't want to keep you if you want to be free.

NANCY: I don't want to be free. Oh, wait, I want to be honest with myself and with you. I couldn't go back to my life as I lived it four years ago. It isn't that I don't want my home! While I was in France there were glorious moments and honors and flattery; but there were nights when I was so sick of the horrors, the pain, the misery, that it seemed to me if I couldn't put my head on your shoulder and cry out the loneliness in my heart against yours, I couldn't go on. With death on every side, I used to worry for fear you weren't taking care of yourself. They decorated me for bravery. They never knew what a coward I was about you. Why, on this tour, the nights when I had had a great success and while the people were crowding around me, congratulating me, I'd see some wife tuck her hand through her husband's arm, just as I had tucked mine so many times through yours, and she would trot away home with her man, and I would go to a lonely hotel room



FAIR: "Oh, Nancy, you know damn' well I want you! You may not be jealous of me, but I am of you and everything that concerns you."



SYLVIA: What right has she—what right have any of you to butt in on my affairs?

and think about you—then's when I would realize that success meant nothing if I had to give up you. *(She breaks down and cries in FAIR's arms. He murmurs her name, kisses her.)*

FAIR: Then, Nancy, I've got you again.

NANCY: Yes, and hang onto me! If I ever try to go away again, lock me up on bread and water.

FAIR: What about this next tour?

NANCY: There ain't going to be no tour.

Close in each other's arms, they plan for a blissful, reunited future. Nancy is going to get them all back to the country, "out of this hole," she is going to give Sylvia the time of her young life, "buy a lot of frills," make Peggy love her, and "give the grandest party for my two daughters."

FAIR: Nancy, you're a darling.

NANCY: And you're quite sure that I am as well suited to you as Angy Brice?

FAIR: Oh, forget her! I discharged all my obligations to her to-night. *(He leans over to kiss her.)*

NANCY: I'm kind of sorry for poor Angy. *(She is about to return his kiss when the*

echo of the word "obligations" seems to disturb her.) Obligations? What obligations? *(FAIR is confused.)* Has she any real claim on you? *(He does not answer. NANCY rises and backs away from him with pain and horror in her eyes.)* Tell me the truth.

FAIR: For God's sake, Nancy, be big enough to understand! *(She buries her face in her hands.)* It was just after you had gone on this tour. You know how we parted. You didn't write to me. I was lonely, reckless. But I've never loved her. You won't believe it, but I've never ceased loving you.

NANCY: Stop. Stop. Everything you say only makes it more horrible. *(There is silence, then NANCY controls herself and speaks calmly, coldly.)* I'll go West and establish a residence. We won't drag in Mrs. Brice. Your lawyer will make all the necessary arrangements and communicate with me.

FAIR: Nancy, you're not going to hold me entirely to blame. You're not going to dodge your own responsibility. Surely you don't think my affair with Mrs. Brice a greater sin against our love than your craving for a career?

NANCY: And surely you are not daring to place me in the same category as yourself?

FAIR: Why not? Do you think you can

starve my affections, my passion, for years without moral guilt?

NANCY: You must be mad to think such thoughts and lost to all sense of decency to express them. I refuse to listen to anything more. All I want to know is, are you going to try to keep me against my will, or must I make a scandal to get free? (*FAIR is silent.*) Surely you don't want to blacken the name of the woman you are going to marry?

FAIR: I am not going to marry her. She knows it. I'm not in love with her nor she with me. A sum of money will console her.

NANCY: Your bargain with her has no interest for me. Make what use of your freedom you choose. I mean to have mine.

FAIR: Very well. My lawyer knows the amount of my income. You may have what you wish of it.

NANCY: I wouldn't take any of it if it were not for Sylvia.

Mention of Sylvia presents a stumblingblock on which neither had counted. Each is determined that the other shall not have her. Fair finally suggests that the choice be put up to Sylvia herself. He is about to open the door of her room when Alan and Peggy burst in, excitedly demanding to know where Sylvia is. Alan is sure he saw her drive away in a taxi with Gillette. Peggy goes into her empty room and discovers a letter on her dressing table—a pitiful note of farewell to her father to the effect that since no one else wants her she has gone away with Gillette. Police headquarters are at once notified and the frantic pursuit of the eloping couple begins. The men go out on the hunt, in which they are aided by Peggy's brother, Tom Gibbs. All the famous Mrs. Fair can do is stay at home and wait in an agony of self-recrimination and suspense, her face pressed to the windowpane, her mouth moving in soundless prayers with the same burden, "Oh, God, find her! Find her!" Then Fair returns, his face haggard and drawn with suffering. Little is said, but it is evident that the torture they are sharing is drawing husband and wife together. Fair points out that the fact of the money owed Mrs. Fair by Gillette

furnishes a powerful motive for the elopement with Sylvia. Once having compromised her, he could hardly be sued without dragging her into it.

Into the tense atmosphere of agonized suspense Alan brings Sylvia, furious over being pursued and caught, and bursting with indignation at her family for what she feels is the disgrace to which they have subjected her. She repulses her mother's embrace. "I can take what everybody has to say, standing."

NANCY: We're not going to scold you. We're not going to say anything.

SYLVIA: No? Well, I am! (*Jeffrey tells ALAN to take PEGGY into MRS. FAIR's room, but SYLVIA stops her imperiously.*)

SYLVIA: She needn't go. She's in on this. (*Then, to PEGGY*) You were responsible for our arrest, weren't you? Don't you think, for a new member of this family, you were taking a good deal on yourself to—

FAIR: Come, come, Sylvia! It was I who got Tom Gibbs on the wire. You should be very grateful to Peggy and her brother. God knows we are.

SYLVIA: I'm not! What right has she—what right have any of you to butt in on my affairs? (*Indignant, defiant, she accuses them all of conspiring against her, but finally sinks into a chair, and cries.*) Why am I dragged back here? Nobody wants me—

NANCY: Your father loves you, wants you.

SYLVIA: A lot he loves me! He loves Angy Brice. Everybody has known, but us, that he was going to get rid of mother and marry Angy. Mother, aren't you going to leave daddy?

NANCY (*turning away*): No.

FAIR: Nancy!

SYLVIA (*bewildered, going to her mother*): Why, Dudley said— That's why I went with him. I didn't know what would become of me when you separated. I thought daddy had gone back on me. (*Looks up at him; puts her head on NANCY's shoulder.*)

FAIR: Sylvia, I'll never go back on you, if you'll only— (*With one arm around her daughter, NANCY reaches out to her husband. He kisses her hand in gratitude.*)

NANCY: Jeff, don't make conditions. We've both been wrong; we must be content with whatever Sylvia wants.

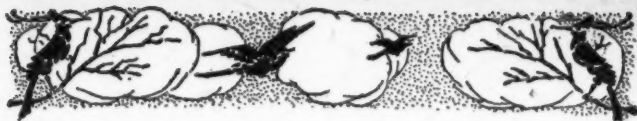
SYLVIA (*brokenly*): I only want you all to want me.

NANCY: Oh, my dear, my dear!

PEGGY: Alan, where is Gillette?

ALAN: In an ambulance.





A Tempered Wind

By Henry Payson Dowst

Author of "The Bonds of Matrimony," "John Barleycorn, Jr.," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

If you had been in Gus Inch's place, wouldn't you have been stirred at least by this peculiar romance in the life of young Adelbert Lamb, as it unfolded before you?

A YOUNG man, in a fashion half leisurely, walked into the Farmers' & Merchants' National Bank of Kearsarge, stopped alongside a glass shelf to scribble a deposit slip, and then laid the slip with an indorsed check upon the ledge of the teller's window.

It was a noon hour in spring. Across the street the trees in the city park were gay in a sartorial equipment of pale, yellowish green, and the bank doors were swung wide open to admit the mild May airs.

"Nice day," observed the young man.

He was good looking, boyish, and very friendly. His clothes were considerably worn, but you knew they had been cut from the best of fabric; and they still possessed a subtle suggestion of caste which not even the costliest suit in Robinson's One Price Clothing Store, corner of Cedar and Main Streets, could possibly suggest. They said unmistakably that here was no native son of Kearsarge. Augustus Inch, "Old Gus," carrying upon his shoulders the double burden of paying and receiving teller, looked through his wicket and returned the depositor's greeting with mild courtesy.

"Very," he said. "Looks like an early spring."

"Hope it doesn't fool us," replied the young man, and took his leave.

The teller gazed after the departing youth with an odd wistfulness, and for a second time scanned the check for fifteen dollars just deposited. He made a memorandum on a slip of paper and impaled the check on a spindle.

Gus' face was round, pink, and fairly smooth, his hair threaded with traces of silver and a trifle scant over forehead and crown. His brows were thick and dark, and his deep-set eyes looked out from behind his wicket with a blue directness somewhat dreaded by those depositors who were prone to let their daily balances sag below the required limit.

Honest, faithful, plodding old Gus Inch, schooled in a business which reverses the dictum: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," must be all the villain the tale can boast, not to say one Inch a hero. He stooped a little, from much bending over his work. He seemed a sort of fanatic on the subject of work, for in business hours he personified application; out of business hours he kept a garden. On the street he went shyly

about his affairs, returning salutes with a diffident half nod.

Not much of a bank, to be sure, was the Farmers' & Merchants'. Yet it served, in that modest community, and in serving prospered. Gus had been its composite paying and receiving teller for a decade and a half.

Yet in Augustus Inch dwelt a soul tuned to the soft notes of love, the trombone blasts of adventure, and the vibrant melody of romance. For over fifteen years the physical part of the teller had not ventured beyond the borders of that small town, but the psychic self of him had footed the world's broadest highways and penetrated its deepest jungles.

He had made love to the daughters of peasant and prince, trod the decks of ships loafing across the line where the sun fries out the stuffing, the putty—well, whatever you call the goozlum used to fill the seams in a ship's deck, tracked the tiger to his lair, braved the perils of pole and police, bulldozed the bucking broncho, and bucked the dozing Bronx, throwing the bull with equal facility in Barcelona and Broad Street.

He had once quit a typhoon-shattered wreck and swum ashore with the skipper's lovely daughter on his back to an unchaperoned island in tropic seas, there to await the tardy appearance of rescuers. He had basked on the sunny veranda of a palm-thatched South Coast bungalow and gazed off across the Caribbean toward the invisible walls of San Pedro and the Grand Caimans, sipped the fermented milk of green coconuts, and sharpened his machete to battle with lowbrowed Miguel Gonzales for the favor of a russet-colored Pinera girl. Gus had as many red gods in his system as the poet who invented them.

True cosmopolite, he was consummately at home in the stately mansions which intersperse the billboards of upper Fifth Avenue. He could stand

with a dish of French ice cream in one hand and a glass of vintage root beer in the other, a napkin of real twenty-eight-dollar-per-dozen damask tucked negligently in his shirt bosom, and swap small talk, repartee, and persiflage impartially with subdeb or subdebtor. There was no corner of the globe he had not explored, no human emotion he had left unplumbed. As a plumber, he had garnered the choicest plums in the garden of literature. There, the cat is out!

Gus was what you call an omnivorous reader, his seven-league boots a pair of slippers, his magic carpet woven from the twenty-six letters of the alphabet.

Daily, from nine until four, he manipulated endless columns of figures, took in, paid out, made up the shoe factory pay roll, and kept a jealous eye on the bank's assets. In the late afternoon, weather and season permitting, he dived in the rich, brown soil of his small garden. After dark, in the little house where he kept bachelor's hall, assisted a couple of days each week by an elderly colored woman who mended his socks and tidied things, he lighted his lamp, put on his seven-league slippers, and went hopping about among the latitudes and longitudes of this event-laden planet.

In fifteen years he had read every book of travel, adventure, and romance on the public-library shelves. He had bought and swapped and borrowed many others. It seemed as if his mania for fiction was unappeasable. His spirit was always on the go, and even as he set down and added up interminable columns he climbed the chill slopes of Everest or descended to ocean depths in a submarine boat built with a plate-glass window, through which queer-looking monsters attempted to enter and dine with or on him, according to their several tempers.

But they say there are but seven basic plots, and so, in time, came to

Gus a measure of dissatisfaction. Inescapably there crept into each succeeding tale a reminiscent quality as of old stuff. And Gus, who didn't realize that there *were* but seven plots, couldn't understand why even the newest tale should reek with the must of stale situations. Darn it! Weren't there any fresh stories? Well, why not write them? That would be as entertaining as reading the works of others. It would be fascinating to build up char-

having at least the merit of contemporary locale and atmosphere. But, still in his bosom gnawed the ambition of one who would create or assemble in some unhackneyed way the elements of romance.

And the way occurred to him one morning as he scanned the canceled check of Giuseppe Fidelio, fruiterer, magnate of shoe-shine parlors, owner of a barber shop, real-estate operator, landlord, proprietor of a public garage.



Here was the answer. Giuseppe was taking the pair to inspect a prospective dovecot.

acters, as a sculptor shapes clay figures. So, one night, instead of plunging into some new-old novel, Augustus Inch seized a pen and thrust it into a just-opened five-cent bottle of ink. Here was a well-accustomed implement to his hand.

But, trained to the stiff academics of two plus two, his fingers refused to become accessory to villainies, clandestine loves, or bloody piracies. Paralysis took numbing hold of brain and hand.

"Mercy!" groaned Gus. "How do they do it?"

So, perforce, he returned to his reading and, by increasing his expenditures for magazines, managed to find here and there some tales of a fresher sort,

Gus Inch held between his thumb and finger a chapter from the life of a self-made man. The amount of the check, the name of the payee, the supporting plenitude of the Italian's balance, all considered in relation to the cramped signature of an almost illiterate forger, epitomized Success.

Giuseppe had migrated to America many years before. Once a penniless youth, he was now well to do and a member of the Kearsarge Chamber of Commerce. The history of his life had written itself on the faces of hundreds of checks made payable by and to the fruiterer during all those years, a history none but Gus Inch had been privileged so intimately to read. Gus knew

things about Giuseppe no one else in town suspected.

An idea now fired the imagination of the teller. He hurriedly fingered his piles of lately deposited and cashed checks, and among them found much material for thought. The information was confidential; but, in the tales the checks were to tell him he sought simply his own entertainment. So he opened forthwith what may be termed his ledger of romance, a set of five-by-seven-inch cards, on which he entered painstakingly the names of such patrons of the bank as betrayed by their financial transactions the warp and woof of his *comédie humaine*.

Thereafter, when any of the select few drew or deposited a check, Gus noted the particulars for this romance ledger; and of evenings he would sit in the lamplight, shuffling the cards and sketching upon the tablets of imagination lively pictures of his fellow townsmen's doings. Every check yielded its episode, its factor in the complex equation of life about him—an equation made up of elements commercial, moral, social, domestic.

And Gus got some startling combinations. His was a game of putting this and that together, comparing, matching, fitting, and joining, as when one lavishes the night upon a damnably absorbing picture puzzle. He learned things sinister and alarming, things exciting mirth, things that pulled upon his sympathies.

There was lawyer Pawson, a man fattened upon the dole of corporations, steamily important, depositing occasionally a large check upon some distant bank, a fee from a client whose identity the signature on the check did not expose. Gus pondered and speculated and drew conclusions. There was Mrs. Lusk, widow of the herbal sort, pretty and soft-eyed and appealing, who regularly placed an alimony check to her credit and as regularly drew her own

check for the monthly rental of a small house belonging to Deacon Daniel Colliss. It was generous of the deacon to reduce Mrs. Lusk's rent ten dollars a month, though the good old soul found it necessary to tack an extra five on each of two other tenants.

So life in Kearsarge became to the teller a book of which he turned a new page each day, a true novel, unfolding itself for his delectation. The artful efforts of the fictionist lost their charm for Gus. Here was something real, something tangible, something he could read from the inside. He was as pleased as a fly on the wall at a meeting of a ladies' secret society.

Inevitably his interest centered in the person of one character, young Adelbert Lamb, clad in the habiliments of a shabby millionaire, a lamb in frayed wool, upon whom, seemingly, blew a wind far from tempered; for Adelbert was "reading law" in the office of Pawson, the attorney, receiving from his employer a weekly wage of fifteen dollars. To him went out the true sympathy of the bank teller, who disliked Pawson. It was not in the Pawsonian nature to treat any one with generosity. In the stripling's smile Gus read a patient, if negligent, resignation. He appeared a lamb led to the slaughter; for, in his dwindling balance, Gus perceived the approaching exit of an important actor from his *comédie*.

The sheep-shearing Pawsons of commerce and the law might exploit ninety-nine other woolly ruminants to their wicked hearts' content, for all Gus cared; but he shuddered to see his own, the all-important hundredth, slowly, but surely nearing the logical association of all his kind with carrots, potatoes, and onions, while Destiny, grim chef, stirred the broth.

Adelbert Lamb's original deposit had been a cool thousand dollars. To this he had added his weekly salary checks; but, as his expenses seemed considerably

in excess of his receipts, his balance had fallen to less than eight hundred. As the diminution continued, Gus' anxiety became increasingly poignant. He wanted Adelbert to set foot upon a higher rung in the ladder to success. He yearned to note a raise in salary recorded in Lamb's deposits.

Against huge odds, Giuseppe Fidelio had succeeded; how much better were the chances of this well-born and winsome youngster! Why, his personality was an asset in itself, and he had started with a thousand dollars and a job. Yet Gus, a model of frugality, observed with regret Adelbert's tendency to lavish expenditure. Checks against young Lamb's account were credited to Samuel H. Blossom, the local florist, and to Riggs, Kearsarge's society confectioner, whose windows were filled with sugared allurements, fresh every hour, and at whose towering fountain of onyx and silver, a pagan altar to the sticky goddess, Saccharina, rendezvoused the sundae-drugged youth of the town. Well, you had to expect that. The boy was probably in love.

This assumption was confirmed one day by the sight of Adelbert in company with a pretty, light-haired young lady, riding—and this gave Gus an hour of hard thinking—in an automobile driven by Giuseppe Fidelio. Oh, yes, that block of tenements owned by the thrifty Italian! Here was the answer. Giuseppe was taking the pair to inspect a prospective dovecot.

This conclusion caused the romantic teller a conflict of emotions. At the thought of young love, no matter how headlong, a pleasing glow warmed his heart. It gave place to misgiving, when he wondered how the rash young man dared set up even the simplest of homes on fifteen a week.

Unexpectedly, however, and much to Gus' delight, Lamb's salary check jumped to twenty-five dollars. The boy

was getting on. Doubtless his services to Pawson were worth twice as much; trust that bird to buy them at a bargain.

But the steady diminution of Adelbert's balance continued to alarm the teller. His checks were deposited by J. G. Robinson, One Price Clothier and Haberdasher, and by Michael Slattery, of Slattery's Smart Bootery; yet he still wore his increasingly threadbare suit and the derby which failed to disguise by its lusterless surface the subtle New Yorkiness of its contours. His withdrawals of cash continued the process of erosion upon his principal.

In the estimation of Augustus Inch, Adelbert was accumulating a wardrobe and various other personal accessories in preparation for his coming nuptials. Gus imagined this finery hanging smoothly in the closet of Adelbert's modest lodgings or neatly folded in his bureau drawers.

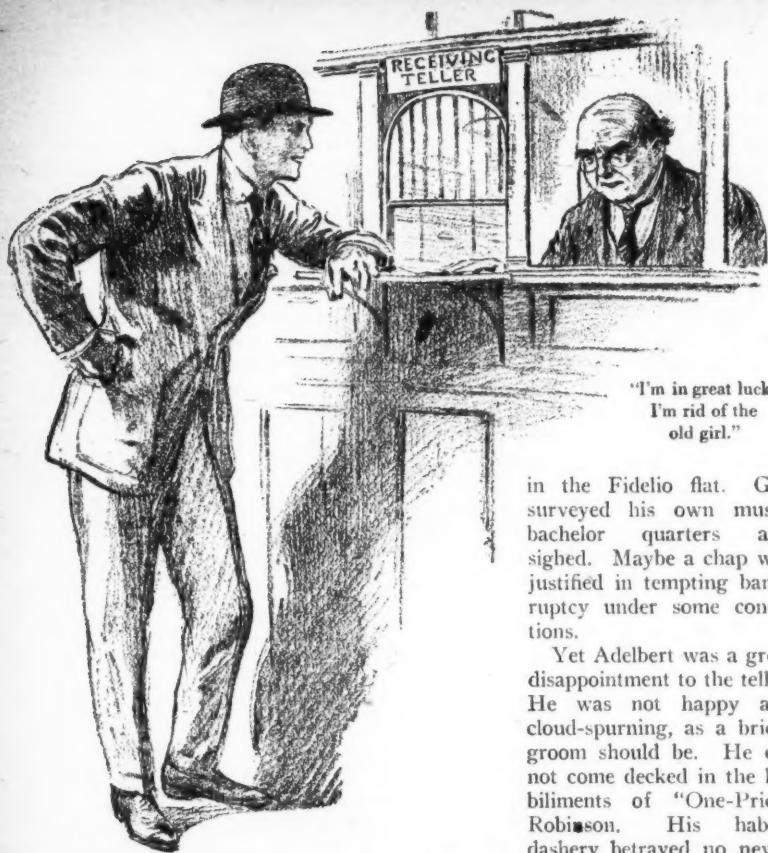
Then, against his shrinking nest egg, Lamb drew out at a single, slashing stroke, three hundred dollars. Augustus shivered as he passed over the bank notes; shivered with a romantic appreciation of what the money was to buy; shivered with misgiving for the young man's depleted resources.

"Nice day," observed Lamb with sad, gay negligence.

"Very," gulped Augustus.

For two weeks he saw nothing of Adelbert, but from a city fifty miles distant a couple of the young man's checks, cashed at a hotel, came in for payment. Augustus sighed and wished the happy pair a blissful honeymoon. There was still a little left of Lamb's balance, and Augustus hoped, vainly, he supposed, that the couple might at least begin life in the Fidelian flat free from indebtedness.

The bridegroom returned and—cashed a check for two hundred. The mercury in the Lamb financial thermometer dropped almost out of sight. But Inch had to concede that it takes



"I'm in great luck!
I'm rid of the
old girl."

in the Fidelio flat. Gus surveyed his own musty bachelor quarters and sighed. Maybe a chap was justified in tempting bankruptcy under some conditions.

Yet Adelbert was a great disappointment to the teller. He was not happy and cloud-spurning, as a bridegroom should be. He did not come decked in the habiliments of "One-Price" Robinson. His haberdashery betrayed no newly

money to set up housekeeping. Furniture, rugs, pictures, dishes—a couple of hundred dollars would fall far short of sufficiency. His conjecture was confirmed when Adelbert's checks began coming in through Buchholz's Bargain Furniture House, Your Credit Is Good With Us. Furnish Your Home With Buchholz Bargains. So the hapless couple had embarked upon the treacherous sea of a little down and a little forever.

Giuseppe Fidelio deposited Adelbert's checks with painful regularity. So the Buchholz Bargains had been installed

wed exuberance. He was more threadbare than ever. Practically penniless, he appeared thus early to be repenting in shabby leisure the rash haste of his badly financed marriage. He seldom had his salary checks passed to his credit, but contented himself with exchanging them for their equivalent in cash.

His sunny, negligent smile no longer lent charm to his youth. Sombre spots added to the inelegance of his attire, and at times his face bore sooty marks. His hands were grimy from some base and menial task.

"Poor boy!" thought Augustus. "Taking care of furnaces to eke out a living, I'll bet my hat!"

Alone with his depressing notations, Augustus pieced together what had started as a sprightly romance and now bore the visage of stark tragedy. The checks of various depositors might have uncovered rich lodes of human interest, but Adelbert Lamb's affairs pushed everything else into a hazy background. Gus could feel the disturbance of an approaching climax, as a coming train is heralded by the vibration of the rails. He braced himself for the shock. Only the dregs of the Lamb assets remained to his credit—a residuum expressible by a decimal point followed by a cipher and the figure three.

And then, just before closing time one day, in blew Adelbert, still clad in the clothes which indexed an unmistakable poverty, but with something of the old gayety in his manner.

"Hello, Mr. Banker!" cried the shorn, not to say moth-eaten Lamb. "Count that, will you? Ought to be three hundred and fifty; and please see that it's credited to my account right away; because by to-morrow night there won't be much to show for it. But never mind, I'm in great luck! I'm rid of the old girl. And say, take it from me, she blame near ruined me. Nice day, isn't it?"

"Very," agreed Augustus, habit coming to his rescue. But his acquiescence was only mechanical. He fingered over the pile of messy bills thrust at him by Adelbert, initialed the deposit slip, and allotted the bank notes to their proper compartments in the till. The world whirled in misty circles before his eyes. "Yes, it's a nice day, Mr. Lamb."

So, Destiny had not only stirred the broth of which Adelbert Lamb formed the essential ingredient, she had upset the kettle and spilled the whole brew!

As had risen the heroes in all the books, Gus Inch had hoped to see Adel-

bert climb the rugged slopes of circumstance. Marriage does not interpose inherent obstacles between a man and success. Quite the contrary. A good and thrifty wife has pulled many a man over the gnarled rails of the fence dividing poverty and opulence. Why couldn't Adelbert's domestic life prove a highroad to happiness?

Instead—"rid of the old girl!" Dreadful! Love, panic-stricken at the baying of poverty outside the door, seeing the flick of a red-hot tongue through the chinks, hearing the scratching of burglarious, vulpine claws, had popped out the window to scamper down the fire escape of the Fidelian tenement. Adelbert Lamb hadn't even attempted to do a Davy Crockett for the benefit of a breathless audience.

The books, stale as they were, gave one something better than this. Inch crept disgustedly between the sheets, his romance ledger for once neglected in his pocket.

Next day, to verify Lamb's prediction, enough checks bearing that unfortunate youth's signature came pouring in to wipe out nearly every penny of his three-hundred-and-fifty-dollar deposit. They were payable to a score of persons and firms, evidently in settlement of debts. It was a relief to Gus to get through the day without being obliged to decline any of Adelbert's checks for want of funds; but another five-dollar draft would have done it!

Heavy-hearted, Gus went home. For once, he neglected his garden. He didn't want any supper. Morbidly, alone in the little house, he went over the financial annals of Adelbert Lamb. And, as he did so, a desperate resolve shaped itself in his soul. Could he not save the mad boy? Was it too late?

In the dark of the early evening he emerged from his door, clad in a heavy winter overcoat with a high, concealing collar and a slouch hat pulled well over his eyes. By an ingenious adapta-

tion of stuffing from his mattress he had improvised a beard which provided still further security against inquiring glances. It gave him the aspect of a furtive Santa Claus.

Avoiding the glare of the street lamps, he threaded the back ways until he reached the neighborhood of Fidelio's flats. There, for a long two hours, he waited and watched. Then, when his sense of defeat had almost given way to conviction, he saw a door open and a slim figure descend the steps. It was Lamb. He started off at a brisk pace, but Augustus made shift to overtake him.

"I beg your pardon," rumbled the teller, out of hirsute depths. "Ahem!"

Lamb turned.

"Sorry, old top," he said. "I'm about broke myself. Haven't a thin dime in my clothes. I know you're out of work and haven't eaten a morsel for three days and only need the price of a ticket to Chic—"

"No, no!" cried Augustus. "Don't misunderstand me. It is not to beg that I attracted your notice. Rather, I desire to help you."

He was sure there was no false note in this approach. It was done that way in the books, except that he thought he might have addressed Adelbert as "young sir." The salutation had a fine resonance.

"Well, that's mighty decent of you," returned Adelbert. "But I don't know any special way you could help me. I haven't asked any one to—"

"Quite so, quite so," agreed Augustus hastily. "But it has been my—er—fortune to learn—oh, in a perfectly legitimate way, you understand—that certain—er—well, that your life has been marred by mischances, or, if I may say so, that your most cherished plans have gone sadly awry. That is true, is it not?"

Adelbert gazed in surprise at as

much as he could see of his questioner's face.

"You certainly said a quantity of words!" he acquiesced. "But I don't know that it's any one's business."

"But I—I am anxious to help you, young sir!" There, Gus didn't think it sounded just as it did when the caliph said it in that Bagdad yarn. "Could we not—isn't there some place where we could be alone for a few moments—some obscure café?"

"They're all obscure, since last July. Still, if you know of a place where the blighting hand of the eighteenth amendment has not yet set foot, you'll find me a game guy, grandpop! I'll try anything once; but I reserve the right to beat you up something scandalous if you pull any rough work."

Augustus turned and trotted off in the shadows, young Lamb close at his heels. Over Gus' shoulder floated a muffled, hollow assurance that he never drank liquor; all he wanted was a chance to have a few words with Adelbert.

"Kind of a rum proposition," muttered Lamb.

His bewhiskered guide led the way to a shady park, where he motioned Adelbert to a seat on a bench.

"This," began Augustus, "concerns your future most deeply. I appreciate what poverty means to one in your position. I appreciate the fact that you have undertaken a burden that no young man should assume without careful and prudent thought."

"Right again, Father Time. But how the dev— Well, anyhow, I've got that situation all ironed out. I'm through, finished, all done. Get me?"

"That is the sad part of it," protested Augustus. "That is why I made bold to accost you and offer assistance. I have been observing your goings and comings."

"Detective? Well, of all the nerve! Who would want me followed, I'd like



At the recollection of what he had passed through, Adelbert Lamb dropped his head in his hands and sobbed.

to know! Couldn't be old Pawson would have any reason to——"

"No, no, young sir." It sounded a little better this time. "Say, rather, *deus ex machina*."

"Oh, is that so? 'Ex' machine is right. It's more than *ex*; it's retired, *emeritus*; in fact, it's canned."

"The serious financial results——"

"I should say, serious. But listen, she looked good to me. All painted up and——"

"Oh, I beg of you!" Augustus shuddered.

"Well, that's the truth. I was—well, I suppose the law of libel won't let me say swindled, but honest, grandfather, Fidelio dolled her all up like a Christmas tree and I fell."

"But," cried Augustus, "with a little financial assistance, couldn't this thing be patched up?"

"Good Lord! Patched up? That was what was the trouble. She was

nothing but a patched-up job when Fidelio wished her on me. But that's all right; I've just made him take her back. He paid me three-fifty yesterday and the rest just now."

Visions of an unspeakable traffic in human units—what was it the Italians called it—the "padrone" system?—well that was something like it; and the rich Giuseppe Fidelio was doubtless secretly in collusion with some underground society or agency.

"How can you?" cried Augustus. "How can any decent man speak thus of a young wife?"

"Wife!" Adelbert Lamb burst into a satirical laugh. "Wife! You're nutty. Say, I'm talking about something that would have kept me poor the rest of my life, so poor that if I'd ever thought of a wife I'd have been—as—as crazy as you are. The two things don't happen in the same family, except just before the bankruptcy proceedings start. I used to think candy and flowers and theater tickets and motor cars that a guy hired by the hour cost money—but say! Compared to gasoline and oil and storage and repairs—zowie! I bought myself a lot of good clothes—fat chance of wearing 'em! I'd just spoil 'em with grease. Even got a set of the 'Motorist's Handy Encyclopedia' on easy terms at Buchholz—five dollars a week as long as you live. Hell! A mere wife would be a cinch to support compared with a used Gassump! I'm through, I tell you! Me for the practice of the law and a motorless life for the next ten years."

At the recollection of what he had

passed through, Adelbert Lamb dropped his head in his hands and sobbed. When he recovered his composure he looked up, an apology on his lips; but his companion was gone.

Four days later Adelbert presented himself at the teller's wicket of the Farmers' & Merchants' National. He thrust across the glass ledge a deposit slip accompanied by a check to his order for one thousand dollars, signed "Ephraim H. Lamb." Sartorially, Adelbert was all that Robinson's One Price Clothing Store could make him. And the old, confident, half-negligent smile once more illuminated his face.

"Guess that'll fix up my account, eh?" he chuckled. Then, confidentially, "Little present from my father, on learning that I passed my bar exams. And say, Mr. Inch, from now on I hope my account will grow instead of shrink. I'm going to salt down a little piece of change every week."

"The bank has always appreciated your business, Mr. Lamb," said Augustus, with expressionless courtesy. "Every one has to start small."

"Thank you," said Adelbert. "Nice day, isn't it?"

"Very," said Augustus. "Quite unusual, for the time of year."

He gazed after the retreating figure of the Lamb toward which the wind had, after all, been only a little quick-tempered.

"Darn!" he grumbled to himself. "Next time I start telling fortunes for other folks, I'll—I'll—use a ouija board."



The Marigold Bug

By Henry C. Vance

Author of "Long Live the Kink," "One Miracle, C. O. D.," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. W. KEMBLE

**A darktown story of love and a "niggah who couldn't count."
Mr. Vance knows his characters, and this is, perhaps, the
funniest of the four tales he has thus far told for SMITH'S.**

MATH HONEYCUTT'S roadster drew up in front of the Bonton Pool Parlors. Math's silhouette complexion glistened in the sun, as he extricated himself from behind the steering wheel, and stepped out as lightly as his excessive poundage would permit, for, truly, Math's waistline had the architectural structure peculiar to a mosque dome, and he was doubly blessed with chin.

Despite rotundity of figure, however, Math had not allowed negligence to usurp sartorial perfection. He was groomed resplendently in a tightly fitting suit of the barred Plymouth Rock pattern, with purple handkerchief, scarf, and other accouterments to match. No dagger was ever sharper than the toes of Math's tan shoes, and no diamond ever shone more brilliantly than the horseshoe pin, embedded in that rich purple tie. Math's appearance, in fact, was a harbinger of prosperity, and eyes of awe were legion, when he passed any gathering of male beings.

The negro briskly stepped through the revolving doors, and with his usual pomp and swank, flipped a half dollar on the cigar show case.

"Is you' bein' waited on?" smiled Marigold Kay, combination cashier and clerk.

"Ah is, an' Ah ain't, sweetie," replied Math, surveying the charming Marigold, his eyes a-glitter with admiration. "Maybe mah words has went

plum' ovah yo' haid, but whut Ah means is dat yo' is waitin' on me; but yo' doesn't know it."

Math invariably persisted in forced familiarity with Marigold and his "confectionary" vocabulary seemed unlimited in the one-sided conversations he inflicted upon the lady. Marigold had always silently resented these bold remarks, and the blush of anger was even now creeping into her caramel-tinted cheeks.

"What's de name of you' fav'rite?" a trace of impatience was evident in the lady's tones.

"A cigah, of co'se; dat's de fus' thing Ah wants."

"What's de name of yo' fav'rite'?"

"Yo' knows plum' well, gal, dat Gawge keeps dem two-bit cigahs in stock 'sclusively fo' me." Math's system always reeked with braggadocio. This was one reason for Marigold's hatred.

She reluctantly drew forth the most expensive cigars, and Math, with the poise of one accustomed to the best, probed until his fingers rested on the two cigars of his choice. One of these he placed in his coat pocket and the other he inserted between two rows of immaculate, alabasterlike molars. Then he stood silently beaming upon the pulchritudinous Marigold Kay.

The maiden blushed under this scrutiny. Plainly she was embarrassed as she nervously fingered a barrette in her straight-haired wig, conscious that



Math's appearance, in fact, was a harbinger of prosperity, and eyes of awe were legion when he passed any gathering of male beings.

Math's midget eyes were focused upon her. Finally, seeking to dismiss the obnoxious patron, the inevitable query of the clerking fraternity came forth absent-mindedly:

"Is dey anything else?"

"Yes, a match is de fus' thing," said he.

"What yo' mean 'de fus' thing?" Hauteur was running rampant with the bored Miss Kay by this time.

"Ah means dat Ah sho' would lak to have mahsef a kiss, aftah Ah gets dat match," leered Math.

"Lakin' ain't gettin'. Yo' is entiahly too pussonal, Mistah Honeycutt." Miss Kay's nose was hoisting to a forty-five-degree angle.

"Dey's plenty of gals what would be proud to say dat Math Honeycutt had kiss 'em."

A stare of refrigeration came from Marigold as she replied in ice-laden voice:

"As a osculator, Ah is teetotally nix, when it comes to menfokes what Ah has only a casual 'quaintance wid. Yo' mus' 'scuse me now, cause Ah's got to call de bottlin' fact'ry an' ordah some sody pop. We is out."

With this parting shot Marigold hastened phone-ward, and Math, very much chagrined over his fruitless attempt to become friends with this charming custodian of cash and cigars, gazed dejectedly out of the window.

A galaxy of habitués of the establishment straggled into the place, and presently Hutchinson Thomas, who thought, dreamed, and lost

pool games, entered. Hutchinson presented a marked contrast to his rival of the cues, Mr. Honeycutt. He was rather gangling and gawky of frame, untidy to the extreme, and walked with a hesitating shuffle.

"Mawnin', Mistah Thomas." Good cheer permeated Math's salutation.

"Tol'ble, jus' tol'ble, brothah Honeycutt. It's de cawns on mah feets." Corns with Hutch were a perpetual pestilence. They were to Hutch what boils were to Job—only more so.

"Evah try soakin' 'em in salt watah?" There was indeed a trace of sympathy in Math's query.

Habeas Corpus Jackson, standing near, laughed.

"Bettah say is he evah tried soakin' 'em in watah?"

Those present guffawed at this show of drollery on the part of Habeas. Doctor Gumption Binkley spat reflectively across the width of the room, and stated philosophically:

"Soakin' a cawn with anything is jus' as bad as soakin' it wid a hammah. De propah treatment fo' a cawn is to cow-hide it. Buy yo' shoes plenty big enough, igno' it by de wholesale, and de fus' thing yo' know mistah cawn jus' natchally ain't."

Paying little attention to the advice of the city's leading medical light, Hutch looked inquiringly at Math Honeycutt. Math returned the gaze.

"What yo' say to a li'l French pool game, Mistah Thomas?"

"Yo' can't make me mad." Hutch's eager tones made it evident that he was straining at the leash.

"At, say two dollahs on de game?" Math always brought such things as money matters up in a casual way.

"Make it light on yo'se'f, as Ah got paid off yestiddy, an' Ah is *right*." Steady reverses never affected the confidence market, as far as Hutch was concerned.

"Let us hope not," gayly answered Math, as the two strolled into the pool parlors.

And, after a two-hour session with his Nemesis, Hutch was forced to retire from the game, having lost his entire week's salary to the crafty and covetous Math. The loser gazed rather mournfully at his conqueror.

"Yo' sho' is mah Jonah, brothah Honeycutt, jus' lak de whale was Jonah's Jonah."

Following this undisputed declaration, Hutch disconsolately slung his long, skinny arms into his coat sleeves and shambled toward the front. His not inconsiderable week's wages had been consumed and the remorse usually coming to the loser was gripping him,

for Hutch hadn't even cigarette money or car fare. Hesitating a moment, he walked over to the cigar counter and, in a modulated voice, addressed Miss Marigold Kay:

"Mis' Ma'gold, would it be askin' too much fo' some cigarettes on time?"

"It ain't cust'mary, Mistah Thomas, but mebbe Ah breaks de cash rule dis time an' keep de 'count in mah haid. When yo' gwine pay fo' dese cigarettes?"

"Sa'urd'y."

"Yo' looks lak yo' got a misery, Mistah Thomas?" Plainly, this damsel, who had scoffed at the advances of Mr. Honeycutt, was considerably concerned over the welfare of the less gorgeous Mr. Thomas.

"Ah ain't feelin' de ve'y bes' in de worl'." And Hutch, frowning to capacity, looked as if his remarks might be authentic.

"Ah is pained to heah it. What's de trouble?" Marigold's every feature bespoke sympathy.

"Well, twixt de cawns on mah feets an' dis heah French pool, Ah is mighty nigh ruin't both phys'cally an' financially."

"Dat Math Honeycutt done whup yo' in pool again?"

Mention of such matters was not the most pleasant thing in the world, and Hutch shifted embarrassedly from one foot to the other, as if the question had pricked a sore spot. He gave a muffled "Yessum" for reply.

"Is yo' broke teetotally, Mistah Thomas?"

"Jus' as flat as a Pompano," sighed the moneyless Hutch.

Marigold's rejoinder was a bit sharp and carried a cargo of sarcasm.

"Yo' may be flat, but 'Pompano' ain't de word. 'Sucker' is mo' 'propriate."

Hutch kicked left ankle with right heel and dug reflectively to the seams of his empty pockets.

"Ah isn't denyin' it."

A kindly gleam crept into Marigold Kay's eyes. She was sorry for the unfortunate Hutch, and hesitatingly she stammered:

"If—ah—er—dat—is—er— Mistah Thomas, if yo' is plum' broke, Ah is got fo' dollars Ah could loaned yo' till come Sa'urd'y."

Hutch Thomas' shoulders straightened. He held his head high and his whole frame stiffened. Plainly his pride was hurt, as he had never fallen so low as to borrow money from a woman.

"Naw'm," he drawled. "Ah is broke as a han't, an' is 'bliged fo' de offah, but, naw'm—dat's all."

"Well, Mistah Thomas, if yo' won't let me loaned yo' money—which Ah mus' say makes yo' de quares' male niggah at la'ge—poss'bly yo' will let me loaned yo' some advice." Marigold spoke as one capable of handling her subject.

Hutch, never suspecting that the maiden was taking more than ordinary interest in his affairs, awkwardly looked askance:

"Name it, Mis' Ma'gold."

"An' yo' ain't gwine get mad, when Ah tells yo'?"

"Nary a bit." Getting mad was one of the poorest things Hutch did.

"To be puffleckly frank wid yo', Mistah Thomas, yo' needs yo'se'f some ed'cashun."

"Says which?"

"Yo' needs to study de multiplyin' table an' learn how to make a few plusses, so yo' bank roll ain't gwine be minus all de time."

"Ah can't say dat Ah gathahs yo'."

"Dat's de trouble, man, yo' com'hen-shun is mighty low, an' ain't 'spected to live, an' yo' 'rithmatick is on de blink, due to de fack dat yo' schoolin' is been sadly neglected."

"Dat's de troof." But the blank stare on Hutch's face was proof enough that the reason for these pointed re-

marks on his gigantic fund of illiteracy had not soaked in.

Realizing this, the illustrious Marigold continued:

"An' dat good-fo'-nothin' Honeycutt niggah is outcountin' yo', jus' outcountin' yo'. Ah noticed 'while ago, when he was countin' up, dat yo' really had eighty-fo' an' him jus' thutty-five, but he made yo' think he win."

"De hell he did!" Hutch's eyes blazed. "If dat's de kin' of game he's playin', Ah's gwine look dat niggah up an' beat him into a pup." For one time in his life Hutch's ire had reached quite an altitude.

Miss Kay, apparently well-stocked with counsel, proceeded to feed it to the ravenous Hutch.

"Naw, suh, Mistah Thomas, dat would be too crude a way to handle de affaih." The emphasis she stressed led Hutch to believe that she was an expert in handling such matters.

As if to signify that he was helpless and willing to place the problem entirely in her hands, he queried:

"What Ah gwine do, then?"

"Yo' is gwine get some 'rithmatick in yo' haid." The lady's words were not in the form of a suggestion, but a command.

"How long it takes me so's Ah can learn dis heah 'rithmatick?" It was the first time Hutch had begun to show real interest, and Marigold, with a Solomon-esque look, ventured:

"By 'plyin' yo'se'f, in fo' weeks yo' ought to be able to make all de com'nashuns in addin' up to sixty."

With this assurance, Mr. Thomas became more bold.

"Miss Kay, Ah is got a prop'sition. Yo' learn me dis heah 'rithmatick, an' Ah will pay yo' well."

"But—Ah is a wu'kin' lady."

Unabashed by this announcement, Hutch suggested anxiously:

"Learn me at night."

As if in deep study, a far-away look

crept into Marigold's eyes, and, with chin held in two palms and with elbows resting upon show case, she was silent for a few moments. Then, as if she had suddenly reached a decision, she dropped the pose.

"Mistah Thomas, Ah is sympathetic wid you', an', providin' yo' doesn't play no mo' pool wid dat Honeycutt niggah 'till de co'se in math'matics is ovah, Ah'll do it."

"Miss' Kay, Ah thanks you' fu'm de bottom of mah heart. If'n everything is sat'sfact'ry, Ah'll stah mah lessons Monday night." And, clasp'ing her hand to bind the bargain, Hutch shuffled up the street, his heart as light as his pocketbook, but an eagerness to gain the mystic knowledge of mathematics sweeping his being.

And, true to the agreement, the impromptu night school began Monday evening at Marigold Kay's home, with Hutch looking better sartorially than Marigold had ever seen him. Totally defunct financially, and absolutely minus a fund of knowledge of mathematics, Hutch was plentifully supplied with pride, and had regaled himself in a new suit of clothes. From whence came the money for the first payment is still another mystery that may never be solved.

"Evenin', Mistah Thomas," greeted Marigold, resplendent in blue taffeta. She was a veritable bundle of smiles.

"Ve'y well dis evenin', Miss Ma'gold. How is it wid yo'?"

"Ah's had a hahd day at de billyahd pahlahs, but de intres' in de new task befo' me has kindah put new life into me." Marigold spoke as if she meant it and her eyes seemed to take on a new luster as she beamed upon her pupil.

"Mighty nice in yo' to say dat, Mis' Ma'gold, but Ah's 'fraid yo' isn't gwine be able to learn me ve'y fas'."

"De ideah, Mistah Thomas! Yo' mus' not think much of mah 'bility as a teachah." This was a mere bit of mischievous railery, but Hutch took it seriously.

"It ain't dat, Miss Ma'gold, but simply dat Ah isn't ve'y fas' to learn." No one knew or stressed Hutch's limitations better or more often than he.

Then, seated on the red plush sofa in the living room, and rather uncomfortable because tight shoes, unsplit at the toes, were torturing corns, Hutch fidgeted nervously for a few moments as his mentor-

to-be puzzled laboriously over a much-worn textbook. Then the initial lesson began.

And for two weeks the work continued steadily during the evening hours, Hutch proving a far more apt pupil than either he or Marigold had anticipated. Thrown together nightly for two weeks, the two grew very fond of each other, also; fonder,



Doctor Gumpston Binkley.

perhaps, than Hutch had expected in the beginning that they could be, but Marigold, in seeing Hutch on his visits to the pool room, had always imagined she would like to list him among her more intimate friends. She also knew Hutch made good wages, and that, should his steady gaming reverses halt, he would be eligible as a matrimonial prospect.

So, with two weeks' knowledge of arithmetic crammed into his cranium, Hutch and his very dear friend stood upon her front porch on a particular evening, after school. Hutch looked dreamily into the eyes of the adorable Marigold. This glance of admiration was a mutual one.

"Mighty nice of yo' to do dis fo' me, Ma'gold; Ah feels dat Ah isn't wuthy of it." Modesty was Hutch's main virtue, and it worked overtime.

"Yo' is wu'thy of anything dat Math Honeycutt is got. He has de ed'cashun how to figure, an' yo' is sho' wu'thy of havin' de same 'vantages."

Hutch was grinning so broadly that the molar rack was visible.

"Yo doesn't seem to lak Math much."

Marigold shrugged eyelids and shoulders and shivered, as if the mere mention of his name was repugnant, asserting:

"Dat niggah gives me de creeps."

Hutch was puzzled.

"He dresses mighty nice. Guess Math is 'bout de swelles' dress' niggah dey is."

"Anybody could dress swell if dey did it on othah peoples' money, lak which he do. Outcountin' niggahs in his occupation, an', in spite of my coldness to'ds him, he can't seem to grasp de ideah dat Ah doesn't admiah him to death. He keeps pesterin' me—sendin' me flowahs an' choc'lits."

"Do Math Honeycutt sen' yo' choc'lits?" There was a touch of jealousy in Hutch's voice.

"Sho' do. Yo' doesn't care, does yo', Hutch?" This was said meekly enough to convince Hutch that his word was law. But he replied:

"Ah ain't got no right to care if Ah does."

"Co'se yo' is, an' de nex' box he sen's, Ah's gwine give right to yo'."

With this admission giving him confidence untold, Hutch bade his charmer good night and wended his way toward The Owl, an all-night negro café. Hutch was chronically hungry and his appetite was doubly urgent this night. As he entered the almost deserted café, he noted Mr. and Mrs. Petroleum Portier seated at a little table. Doctor Gump-tion Binkley was elevated near the counter, busily engrossed in a checker game with the restaurateur, Sam Smilax.

"Evenin', brothah Thomas," greeted the doctor, looking up from his game.

"Tol'ble, doctah, jus' tol'ble."

"Guess it's de cawns, eh, Hutch? Ah isn't seen yo' roun' since de day yo' was complainin' dat yo' was 'flicted wid de bunyonic plague." Then, turning to his opponent, the doctor advised: "It's yo' play, Sam."

Despite Sam's weakness for checkers, he had an eye to business and grumbled:

"Doc, yo' is gwine ruin me yet, wid dese checkahs. Ah is got to wait on de trade. What yo' gwine have, Mistah Thomas?"

"What is yo' got ready to serve?"

"Got some mighty fat oystahs on de half shell."

"Gimme a dozen raws."

Hutch was duly served, and Doctor Binkley and Sam resumed their game. Meanwhile Mr. and Mrs. Portier chattered glibly at their table.

Mr. Thomas had negotiated his tenth oyster, his appetite functioning in grand style, when suddenly his teeth clamped down on some hard substance and his dinner was brought to an abrupt halt.

"Dis heah oystah done swallered a rock or somethin', Sam," he grinned.

"De shell ain't made to eat," grumbled the proprietor absent-mindedly, his mind dwelling solely upon the checker game.

Hutch, completely ignored by the checker devotees, walked over to the Portiers.

"Look heah, Mistah Po'teeah, what Ah is foun' in dis oystah." He held his find so that Portier might see.

"Mutterin' Moses!" exclaimed Petroleum. "It' sa poil!"

Interest in the checker game suddenly ceased, and Doctor Binkley and Sam Smilax gathered round, the doctor advising:

"Dat sho' is a big 'un! Specks a poil dat size is wu'th mos' a hund'ud dollahs."

"Two hund'ud would be mo' lak it," said Mrs. Portier with expert testimony.

The greedy Sam Smilax, realizing the pearl was of some value, immediately laid claim to it, arguing that it was found in his oyster, but he was unanimously voted out of order, the Portiers and Doctor Binkley agreeing that the pearl was rightfully Hutch's property.

Hutch, happy in the thought that he had made such a lucky find, clasped his newly acquired possession tightly, and quit the establishment, feeling that it had, indeed, been his lucky day. As homeward bound, he negotiated the asphalt, Hutch hummed:

"Combs mah haih wid a rabbit foot,
Den has luck all ovah;
Wipes mah nose wid a dollah bill,
An' weahs a fo'-leaf clovah.
Ole Miss Luck is trailin' me—
Nothin' gwine a stop 'er.
Money! Money! 'Tenshun, please!
An' come right heah to papa."

Hutch dreamed that night of frolicsome oysters gamboling around on the ocean's bed, all bedecked in strings of

pearls, but all sad-eyed and grief-stricken over the disappearance of the master pearl. The king oyster of one tribe accused the ruling monarch of the other of stealing away this precious gem, and an international oyster warfare was the result. And, as the oysters battled among themselves, Hutch cackled in his sleep. It was a huge joke to him that there should be such strife in the oyster kingdom, for, while they battled for his Kohinoor of Pearldom, here was Hutch, a thousand miles away, with this precious gem stuffed in the pocket of his equally precious green corduroy vest.

After a night laden to capacity with nightmares, Hutch arose and made a bee line for Harris' Jewelry Store. Hutch had worked for Julius Harris, and he knew the diamond merchant would withhold nothing in regard to the pearl's value.

"Mawnin', boss," greeted Hutch, as the jeweler faced him over a glass show case of rings and watches.

"Good morning, Hutch. What brings you here?"

"Cap'n, Ah's jus' came to yo' fo' 'vice."

"What kind of advice?"

"It's dis away, Mistah Harris. Ah was eatin' down at de Owl Café las' night, an' Ah fin's dis poil in a oystah. What Ah wants to know is how much it's wuth, if any?"

The jeweler took the pearl and examined it thoroughly under the microscope, growing more interested as the inspection continued, and finally exclaiming:

"Nigger luck, pure and simple!"

"Says which, boss?" An ear-to-ear grin was already forming on Mr. Thomas' countenance.

"Hutch, the goddess of luck, ever a native of Ethiopia, still holds allegiance to the sons of her nativity. This gem is worth between two hundred and fifty



"He keeps pesterin' me—sendin' me flowahs an' choc'lits."

and three hundred dollars! Of course, it needs polishing up a bit, and I couldn't afford to give you more than two hundred and twenty-five for it."

Hutch's eyes were busy on an expansion campaign. His mouth was agape as he realized that here was a chance to pick up more money than he had ever dreamed of accumulating. But he had other plans and, despite the alluring offer, he shook his head negatively.

"Naw, suh, Ah doesn't reckon' Ah'll be sellin' dat poil."

"That's probably more than any other jeweler will give you."

"Ah knows dat, Mistah Julius, but Ah knows a suttin' woman dat dis heah poil would look mighty scrumpshus on, made into a 'gagement ring.'"

"Oh, I see!" laughed Harris as he fondled the gem. "But, Hutch, why not sell me this pearl, get the two hundred and twenty-five, buy the damsel a small diamond ring for a hundred and a quarter, and keep the other money for the honeymoon trip?"

"Boss, Ah doesn't know yet whethah they's gwine be any honeymoon trip or not."

"What? You mean to say you're going to give such a valuable present to a woman you're not sure of?" taunted the jeweler.

"Dat's a fack. Ah hasn't spoke to her about Ah an' her gettin' ma'ied, but Ah aims to. If she 'fuses me, how-evah, she's gwine have dat 'gagement ring jus' de same." Benevolence had taken charge of Hutch's being.

"Mighty valuable present for a man of your means to give a mere friend," countered the jeweler.

Hutch, however, was firm in his decision.

"Boss, Ah'd give dat gal mah haid, if it could poss'bly be of any use to her. What will it set me back to get de stone polish up an' put in a ring?"

"Oh, we won't fall out about the price."

"Thanky, boss. An' when can I get it?"

"Two weeks at most."

Hutch bowed and scraped his way out of the establishment, breaking into the chorus of his favorite song once more:

"Gamblah's life is ups an' downs,
But 'when dem bones's behavin',
Sho' can make dem greenbacks grow
An' staht yo'se'f to savin'.
One day yo' pocketbook is fat,
Nex' day ain't got a coppah.
Money! Money! 'Tenshun, please!
An' come right heah to papa."

During the next few days Hutch kept mum anent the find of his pearl, refraining from mentioning the subject even to his beloved Marigold. He also asked Doctor Binkley and the Portiers to keep the thing secret, and paid ten dollars in real money to Sam Smilax for that worthy's silence, the crafty Sam failing to mention during the progress of the deal that he had already told Math Honeycutt.

At the end of two more perfectly good weeks, Marigold admitted, as she gazed rapturously at Hutch, that his preparedness campaign was now mature enough to tackle the scheming Math Honeycutt in a French pool game. Had Hutch been more nimble of brain, or had he possessed more confidence, he would have noted that the charming Marigold regretted the fact that his lessons were over. She had found her task a pleasant one, and now she feared that Hutch would lapse into his madness for gaming, forgetting his way to her cottage in Beal Street.

Hutch wanted encouragement as to his adding ability.

"Yo' thinks Ah is puffedekly safe to shoot some pool wid dat Honeycutt rascal, now does yo'?"

"Sho' does. But——"

"But what?"

"Ah was jus' thinkin', Hutch, dat if Ah teachd yo' de addition all de way to a hund'ud, it might come in handy some time." Love lingered in the damsel's eyes.

"It sho' would," vouchsafed Hutch,

displaying the fact that he was more than eager for the lessons to continue.

"Den yo' wants me to keep on wid de lessons?"

"Suah!"

"Dat Honeycutt niggah has missed yo' contributions to his bank roll, Hutch."

"Do he look prospus as evah?"

"Co'se. Yo' know dat niggah. He's gwine keep up 'peahances regahdless."

"Specks Ah'll try dat niggah a game of pool to-night befo' Ah comes up to de house, jus' to see if'n Ah is safe on de count."

"All right, but don't be too long re-pohntin' fo' yo' lesson."

His first stop after leaving Marigold was the jewelry store of Julius Harris, who handed over the ring with the remark:

"If the girl accepts you, Hutch, my work on this ring comes from me as a wedding present."

Hutch shook his head doubtfully.

"Doesn't know how Ah stan's, fo' ev'time Ah stahts to say somethin' 'bout ma'iage to Ma'gold, mah tho'ts all clogs up lak a man tryin' to eat a hahd-boiled egg without no watah to wash it down, an' Ah jus' natchally gets stalled."

"Brace up," laughed the merchant, "and spit it out. I believe any colored girl in the world would throw her arms around your neck for a ring like that."

"Yo' doesn't know Ma'gold, boss. If she don't lak you', she wouldn't get confectionery wid yo' fo' Adam."

"Well, good luck, anyway."

"Sho' is much 'bliged," smiled Hutch, as he hurriedly effected exit and made his way to the Bonton Pool Parlors. Happily he noted Math's roadster parked at the curb. Overjoyed in the fact that he could do his own counting, he was anxious to give his adding ability a test.

Math spotted his prey the moment he entered, but, in order to veil his

happiness over the appearance of Hutch, he craftily entered into conversation with Doctor Binkley, conveying the impression that he was either ignorant of Hutch's entrance or at least unconcerned over it.

Hutch, not so well equipped with diplomacy, and eager to get in this all-important game, rushed over to Math, and, grasping him by the hand, said:

"How is yo' makin' it, brothah Honeycutt?"

"Ev' thing's lovely, an' de goose is hangin' high, Mistah Thomas. How is it wid you?"

"Ah's still jus' tol'ble."

"Heah yo' is done foun' a poil dat's wu'th two or th'ee hund'ud dollahs, Mistah Thomas?" Math sought to mention this matter with nonchalance.

"Sho' did! But who tol' yo'?" Hutch's face registered surprise.

"Nevah min' 'bout dat li'l minah detail. What did yo' do wid dat poil?"

"Had it polished up an' made into a ring."

"Sol' it, Ah guess?"

"Nope, Ah's got it heah in mah pocket." Hutch was ever ready to contribute any information Math sought.

"Les' see what she looks lak." Even the diplomatic Math could not conceal the covetous gleam in his eye, but it went unnoticed as far as Hutch was concerned. He fished in his pockets. A blank stare came across his face. The ring was gone!

Then, remembering that he had placed it in his sock for safe-keeping, he grinned sheepishly, reached down, and came up proudly displaying the ring. Math took the jewelry and allowed his expert eye to appraise it. Apparently he was satisfied that the pearl was valuable. Then, casually:

"Tell yo' what Ah'll do, Mistah Thomas. Ah'll jus' play yo' a li'l game fo' dat ring."

A game of pool was what Hutch wanted above all else. He desired to

avail himself of this opportunity of displaying his auditing powers.

"It's a bet!" said Hutch eagerly, as he took off his coat and prepared for action.

Math had outcounted Hutch a hundred times, and was confident that he could do it again.

Hutch calculated as he played his shots, and he knew, as the game came to a close, that he had eighty-five points to his hated opponent's thirty-four. He resolved to keep this knowledge to himself, however, leading Math into a trap in order that he could catch the unprincipled Mr. Honeycutt with the goods. As the game ended, Math smiled affably, casually remarking:

"Les count up."

"Suits me," responded Hutch alertly. Math fingered the balls, scratched his kinky head as if busy calculating, then glibly chirped:

"Ah is got sixty-nine, Hutch."

As if satisfied with Math's audit, Hutch chewed upon the stub of a match, and asked:

"An' how many is Ah got?"

"Well, Hutch, if Ah is got sixty-nine, yo' can't poss'bly have mo'n fifty. Yo' see, dey's one hundred an' nineteen points in all, an' Ah is got sixty-nine of dese, and sixty-nine fu'm one hundred an' nineteen leaves fifty, wid none to carry."

"So dat's de how of it, is it?"

"Yo' said it, Hutch! An' dat poil ring is mine."

"Mistah Honeycutt, yo' is jus' 'bout as funny as a couple of crutches," advised Hutch, as he gazed menacingly Mathward, "an' dis poil's jus' 'bout as much yo' prop'ty as de nawth pole. An' yo' is gwine have jus' 'bout as much luck gettin' dis ring as yo' would in cuttin' de nawth pole up an' sellin' it fo' kindlin' wood."

"Ah doesn't un'stan' yo', Mistah Thomas," feebly replied Math. "Isn't yo' a man of yo' wu'd?"

"Ah sho' isn't, cause Ah said to mase'f: 'If Ah ketches dis heah Honeycutt hypocrite tryin' to shawt-change me in de count, Ah's gwine beat his haid into a pup wid a billyahd cue,' an' heah Ah is, standin' befo' him, an' he's all togethah yet."

"Dey mus' be some mistake, Hutch. De Lawd knows Ah wouldn't lie to yo'. Yo's jus' labuhin' undah a mis-sap'henshun."

"Math Honeycutt, Ah'll give yo' a

Exuberant over his mathematical triumph, and eager to break the news of his victory to his mentor, Marigold, the elated Hutch turned on his heel and left what otherwise might have been a mangled Math, unmolested, but humiliated, nevertheless, over the humble way in which he had received Hutch's barrage of wrath. It was a sad blow to learn that Hutch could really count.

Hutch took the complete set of steps leading to Marigold's home in one



Hutch calculated as he played his shots, and he knew, as the game came to a close, that he had eighty-five points to his hated opponent's thirty-four.

surprize buryin', if yo' doesn't shut yo' mouth. Ah'll knock yo' in so many pieces dey'll be holdin' a funeral 'roun' heah on de 'stallment plan fo' months. Now, Ah's gwine call dese gen'mens ovah heah an' let 'em do de countin', to prove dat Ah is right."

The motley group gathered around. Some could count and some could not, but those who couldn't staged the greatest fake mental figuring of their lives, and the verdict was unanimous that Hutch had counted correctly and had won the game.

bound, and Marigold, as if expecting him, appeared immediately.

"Ah is so happy, Ma'gold." Hutch's radiant countenance bespoke the authenticity of his statement.

"Did yo' make de tes' all right, Hutch?" she eagerly queried.

"Sho' did. Beat ol' Math an' counted him to death."

"Dat sho' is fine! Ah feels lak mah effohts hasn't been in vain." Marigold now looked back on her month's work with pride.

"An', Ma'gold, Ah doesn't know

whether yo' is hu'd 'bout it or not, but Ah is came into 's session of a ve'y beautiful poil ring recen'ly, an' Ah wants yo' to 'cep' it as a present fu'm me fo' yo' loyalty in dis crisis."

Still unable to make his avowal of love, Math slipped the ring onto the finger of the dazzled Marigold, and she ran to the light to inspect it, going into ecstasy over its beauty.

"Thanky, Hutch. It sho' is dollin' of yo' to give me dis heah token of 'steem."

"Don' menshun it, Ma'gold. Ah is been savin' it as a subprize." The silly-grin acreage on his face was enormous.

"It's wun'ful!" raved the lady.

"An' ain't yo' proud dat Ah put it ovah dat niggah in de count?" Hutch's chest was busy on an expansion campaign as he thought of his triumph.

"Deed Ah is, Hutch. But what did yo' win fu'm him?"

"Dat ring."

Marigold gave him a puzzled look.

"But Ah thought yo' already had yo'se'f dat ring?"

"Ah did, but Math said he'd play me a game of pool fo' it." Innocence pervaded that face before Miss Marigold Kay.

The lady eyed him as he stood in silence, little realizing the cause for the look of mixed pity and scorn which she was giving him. Finally, with a touch of sympathy in her voice, she said:

"Honey, yo' is became proficient in countin', but de Lawd knows yo' shawt-comin's is so nu'mus dat yo' needs a guahdian to take chawge of yo' completely. De ve'y ideah of allowing dat triffin' niggah to get a chance at dis heah ring without puttin' up nothin' agin' it!"

It suddenly dawned upon Hutch that he had been party to an incredibly foolish wager.

"Yo' sho' needs yo'se'f a guahdian, Hutch, deah!"

"Ah knows it, Ma'gold, honey."

"An' Ah's mos' tempted to fo'ce mah-se'f on yo' as such."

"Ma'gold, dollin', yo' sayin' dat gives me de cuh'age to speak, at las'. Ah craves fo' yo' to be dat guahdian, an' Ah wants to be yo's teetotally. Is yo' want me?"

"Pow'fully bad—mon'stus!"

And, for the first time in his life, Hutch Thomas took the initiative. Stretching out his lanky arms, he drew a willing captive toward him.

An hour later Hutch Thomas, happiness permeating every nook and cranny in his lanky frame, and joy usurping his soul, entered a little florist shop in the downtown section. He found Math Honeycutt there also.

"Jus' mahk dem pansies to Miss Ma'gold Kay, wi da cahd sayin': 'Regahds fum Math,'" drawled the handsomely clothed Math.

Hutch eyed Math for a moment in silence, and then in sarcastic tones he addressed his tormentor:

"Math' yo' may be a puffleck shahk when it come to figgahs, but in dis instance yo' sho' can't put two an' two togethah."

"What yo' mean?" glowered the perturbed Mr. Honeycutt.

"Oh, nothin' much, Math. But it might open yo' eyes to read de daily cullud papah an' read de weddin' 'nouncements."

Then, turning to the florist, Mr. Thomas, completely ignoring the melancholy Math, asked:

"How much do a corsage bouquet of bridegroom roses an' a dozen sun-flowahs set me back?"



Understanding *the* T.B.M.

By Hildegarde Lavender

Author of "Adventure," "The New Snobbery," etc.

The "poor, tired business man" comes in for a little period of sympathy and peace. Lowbrowism vs. Highbrowism.

TO the sewing circle, reconvened with balls of flame-colored wool, with embroidery hoops on which fine linen was stretched, with threads of gold and silver tinsel, and with every flaunting, frivolous announcement that the autocracy of the gray woolen sock was ended, came one who had been, prior to March, 1917, the débutante. Between that date and the present she had been several things, including a canteen worker in France. Laughter came into the bright room with her, and even before she greeted her hostess and the familiar group of friends, she called out:

"Guess what I have just seen!"

They guessed according to their temperaments. She who had been the bride in the old days, and who was the young mother now, sentimentally guessed "Him." The ex-débutante sniffed. The grandmother, hearing the sniff, sighed. The hostess thought that perhaps Charlie Chaplin had been the mirth-compeller, and Madam Croesus hazarded the suggestion of pearl-drop earrings.

"All wrong!" declared the ex-débutante vigorously. "I've seen the doctor, sitting in the subway."

"Sitting?" they all exclaimed incredulously.

"Yes, sitting. But that's not the point. The point is that she was lost to the world in—in the funny page of one of the afternoon papers. Completely, utterly lost!"

"She was revolving a diatribe against the perversion of the national sense of humor," said the hostess.

"She was preparing a bill to bring before the legislature for the suppression of newspaper 'funnies,'" said the grandmother convincingly.

"She was laughing," said the ex-débutante with finality. "Laughing. Enjoying herself."

"She never enjoyed herself with any caricatures less worthy than Hogarth or, in her most lenient moment, Cruikshank," insisted the hostess.

"Who was Hogarth?" asked Madam Croesus, and hastened to cover her inadvertent confession of astounding ignorance by announcing that she had recently bought a set of Cruikshank originals.

And while her friends discussed the possible grounds for the doctor's lapse from her usual stern standard of humor, she herself walked in upon them.

She was half smiling even as she came into the room.

"Skinny Shaner is still with her," jeered one.

"Aren't Mutt and Jeff just too funny!" asked another mockingly.

"Percy and Ferdie are great boys, *n'est-ce pas?*" the ex-débutante demanded, flaunting her tag of French like part of a uniform.

"What on earth are you all talking about?" demanded the doctor, not unnaturally.

They told her, and as she poured herself a cup of tea, she listened thoughtfully to the friendly fusillade of question and taunt.

"It's quite true," she admitted. "I was looking at the 'funnies' and I was laughing at them and I was enjoying them without a single uplifting thought about their pernicious influence on the unformed taste of the young. Have I really always been such a perfect muff, such a complete kill-joy as you are all making me out?"

"Kill-joy nothing!" cried the ex-débutante reassuringly. "You've been the best ever—the very best ever! But—not a lowbrow, doctor dear! And a taste for 'funnies' is a lowbrow taste, isn't it?"

The doctor stirred and sipped her tea reflectively.

"I suppose so," she agreed. She had aged in the years since Europe had burst into flame. Two trips into Serbia on relief missions had graven lines on her strong face which a decade of normal living would hardly suffice to erase. But there was a new look of whimsicality about her, too. "Yes," she continued, "I suppose it is distinctly lowbrow to like the 'funnies,' but I do—lately. Sometimes—I confess it to you—I look at them the last thing before going to bed."

"Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" quoted the ex-débutante in burlesque horror. "Instead of Mar-

cus Aurelius or Thomas à Kempis or Nietzsche or Einstein or something like that!"

"And what is more," pursued the doctor energetically, "I'm convinced that I'm not the only highbrow in the world who has discovered undreamed-of possibilities of lowbrowism in herself—lately."

"I thought lowbrows and highbrows were born, not made," said the grandmother. "I didn't know that one could—could be——"

"Converted?" supplied the doctor. "Well, I am a living example of the possibility, and I can bring you half a dozen examples of as striking changes. There's Mrs. Adee, for example."

"Yes, she has changed," said the young mother. "We—Harry and I—saw her at the Army-Navy game last Thanksgiving, and she was standing up and waving a Navy flag with all the enthusiasm in the world. He was with her, her husband, you know—just as red-moon-faced as ever, but looking positively foolish with pleasure every time he glanced at her. And you remember how she used to treat all his pleasures with utter contempt?"

"She always had some one giving a reading from Tchekoff, or playing Debussy on the afternoons of the big football games that he loved to go to. And she said that her idea of purgatory was supper and dancing in a restaurant. Of course, it was his idea of paradise!"

"How do you account for it?" asked the grandmother. "You ought to have a theory, doctor."

"I haven't thought about it before," answered the doctor. "But now that you have discovered a general lowering of standards in me, I suppose I'd better think about it and evolve a good, dignified explanation of the fact—if it is a fact."

"There isn't any question about the fact," insisted the hostess. "You and

Mrs. Adee are only straws, showing which way the tide has set. But isn't it all part of the great current of extravagance on which the world, tired of war saving, tired of war seriousness, has embarked, and about which it is being scolded so vigorously by all the editors and all the clergymen and all the treasury-department officials?"

"I'd hate to think it was only that," said the doctor. She mused a while. "I suppose there is some of that in it, of course. But—take Mrs. Adee, for example. She isn't one of those who made our Christmas-present bill a sort of national disgrace. She may fill her husband's heart full of bliss by going with him to the world series baseball games, but she isn't spending money like the well-known drunken sailor. It isn't extravagance she's embarked on."

"I know what it is," interrupted the young mother. "She's been brought to her senses by the war. She might have lost her red-moon-faced husband in it, and so she has come to realize what he really means to her and so——"

"Oh, piffle!" cried the ex-débutante, while the doctor merely looked the same contemptuous word. "In the first place, how could she have nearly lost her husband in the war, when he was on some housing commission or something in Washington? And was overage and overweight, beside?"

"And beside, how would that account for me and the fact that I can look at the 'funnies?'" demanded the doctor. "Not even our determinedly romantic young mother can find any sentimental reason for that!"

"Well, explain it yourself, then," said the young mother crossly.

"I will." Behind her glasses, the doctor's eyes were bright with a blending of amusement and of real illumination. "I'll explain it and, moreover, I'll prophesy that the tired business man is going to be better understood by those who have hitherto held him in the great-

est contempt—by the women who have declared that he was the worst foe of good drama, of good music, of interesting conversation.

"The ranks of the upper bourgeoisie—if one is allowed to make such divisions in these days—have been divided into two schools hitherto. There's been the reprobated T. B. M., with his insistence upon musical comedy and his abhorrence of chamber music, with his straightforward contention that Booth Tarkington and Charles Van Loan were good enough for him, and that he would skip the Russians and the Scandinavians and the neo-Celts in his literature. He has hated 'talky' dinners and has preferred a game of auction to listening to the most eloquent liberal who ever came from England or anywhere else in the world. He has liked to eat in public and to sit enwreathed in the smoke of many cigars, and to dance in the intervals of his eating and smoking.

"And when his intense and high-brow wife, or mother or sister or friend, has besought him at least to acquire an opinion on the new art or the new music, he has closed his ears and hardened his heart to their prayers, and has declared that 'the Gibson girl' represented the last word in art as far as he was concerned, and that the jazz band supplied every need of his nature for harmony. And yet, downtown, he has not been an unintelligent jellyfish. He's been a man of brains, of prompt decisions, of high business standards."

The doctor paused for breath. She had been rushing along rather rapidly, developing her theme.

"And the women of his class, before the war," she went on, "were of two sorts. There was his playmate, the woman of the cabarets and the glittering restaurants, the musical comedies, the motor meets, and the ball games, respectable sometimes; his wife, his sister, his cousin, or his aunt. And,

sometimes, not quite respectable. But, in either case, she wasn't really of his class at all. She had no downtown side. There were no eight or ten hours a day, no five or five-and-a-half days a week, when she worked, when she was busied with real problems, put through big deals, conducted large enterprises. She wasn't a true companion-piece to the picture of the T. B. M. because, you see, when she went out with him, she wasn't the T. B. W. in pursuit of recreation. She was just a parasitic growth upon his need of recreation.

"Well, and there was the other sort of woman of his class. She was, in a sense, just as parasitic—only she didn't like it as the playmate parasite did. She loathed it and rebelled against it—and against him. She was Mrs. Adee, despising her husband's amusements and, because she had no regular job in the world, making a job out of trying to popularize other sorts of amusements. She had to be highbrow. All the self-respecting Mrs. Adees had to be highbrow, in self-defense. To offset the essential frivolity of their lives, they had to make a terrific ado about the ponderosity of their interests and occupations.

"Oh, I'm not saying that it was a bad thing! It was probably a very good thing—but it was a fact. The Mrs. Adees founded drama leagues to keep the stage from being hopelessly vulgarized to suit the comedy tastes of the Mr. Adees. They had afternoons with the Russian novelists as a slight counteracting influence against the undiluted Ring-Lardnerism of their husbands and against the fact that they weren't doing a real job. Highbrowism in the female, dear friends, generally is her protest against a lack of work. It is the 'sheltered woman's' substitute for a profession."

"That scarcely accounts for you," muttered the hostess. But the doctor,

launched upon her new theory, was deaf, and she went happily on.

"Yes, the cult of ultraseriousness on the part of most of the women professing it, was merely an offset to the essential triviality of their lives. And then came the war, and with it the leisure-class woman, for the most part, emerged into the working class. And behold! Mrs. Adee, after being a something-or-other in the Council of National Defense, no longer feels the necessity of snubbing her husband's boyish tastes in amusement. She has been a worker—is still a worker. She doesn't have to be a highbrow to justify herself to herself. None of the Mrs. Adees—and there were tens of thousands of them—have to any longer. The tired business man is companioned, nowadays, and for a while, by the tired working woman, and they can together enjoy frivolity, nonsense, even brainlessness."

"But that doesn't account for you," they reminded her. "You and the 'funnies.' You were always a working woman."

"Those of us who have been across," said the doctor simply, "will never be very stern in our demands as to the quality of humor again, I think. Anything that can make one forget, even for a minute, the things one has had to know—that's all one asks. The 'funnies' happen to have struck me. I have a friend who goes to sleep by means of detective stories every night. She used to read nothing more frivolous than Henry James."

She paused and smiled.

"I'm not at all sure," she said, "that it's going to be a good thing for the uplift of the stage and the purification of the national taste in literature, and all that—this taste for the drug of frivolity which the women of a too-terrific world have taken to. But it is going to give a poor tired business man a little period of sympathy and peace."



The Wine-Colored Dress



By Lee Foster Hartman

Author of "Getting Engaged," "The Judgment of Vulcan," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY T. VICTOR HALL

The fascinating story of a very human girl and a New England conscience. Quite unexpectedly came adventure, love, romance, and a certain wine-colored dress—and thereby hangs a tale you will enjoy.

WHEN the door had closed upon the departing figure of Mrs. Townsend Presbrey, Martha Dare stood clutching the knob, and then, with slowly relaxing fingers, allowed the lock to click shut. It was as if the mere working of the mechanism had set a seal of finality upon the bewildering, incredible compact to which, a few moments before, she had assented. Outside, her ear caught the sound of the door of the Presbrey's big limousine thudding softly shut, and then the whir of the starting motor. Martha retraced her way to the little living room at the end of the hall, where her aunt sat complacently drinking a second cup of tea, which their recent caller had politely declined to share.

The disarray of the tea things, and the crumpled remains of the soft, flaky biscuits, alone bore witness to the momentous interview and its astounding conclusion. There lingered in the air, however, the scent of the hothouse violets which Mrs. Presbrey had worn at her waist, upon which Martha's heavy-lidded eyes had persistently hung while the other set forth the purpose of her call and made her proposal. For the most part, she had been obliged to address herself to Martha's aunt, Mrs. Siddons, stoutly immured in the old walnut rocker, because of the lack of any response from the thin-lipped girl, beyond an occasional lifting of a

furtive gaze, as if unable to comprehend the stroke of good fortune which chance was proffering her.

It had been bruited about the little Connecticut town for some weeks that Mrs. Townsend Presbrey had decided upon a voyage to the West Indies in order that her daughter Muriel, too slowly convalescent in the laggard New England winter, might have the benefit of tropic airs and sunshine.

Now, two days before the sailing date, word had come from New York that the nurse, or companion, engaged for Muriel had been taken suddenly ill.

Whereupon Mrs. Presbrey had ordered her car to be driven around to Mrs. Siddons' cottage in Willow Street. There she explained about the invalided nurse and proposed that Martha Dare should go in her place.

And there was no objection struggling to the surface of Martha's dismayed mind, but failing of utterance in her bewilderment, which Mrs. Presbrey did not anticipate and voice for her, disposing of every obstacle until it seemed absurdly no effort at all for Martha Dare to pick up on forty-eight hours' notice and accompany Mrs. Presbrey and her daughter to the West Indies.

To the speechless girl, who dimly recalled a single trip to Boston in the far-off years before her parents had died, Mrs. Presbrey's proposal was like the unfolding of a gorgeous dream.

She recalled a poster exploiting such a winter tour—the cool green of drooping palms against a sky and sea of translucent blue, in which an ocean steamship, vast and immaculately white, moved serene. It was to this veritable fairyland, immeasurably removed from Martha's ken, that she was actually bidden to come.

Now that the visitor was gone, Martha began mechanically to gather up the tea things, preparatory to carrying them out to the kitchen. No word escaped her thin lips, pressed to their line of habitual taciturnity, and her glance, when at last she paused to look at her aunt, was directed toward the teacup, which Mrs. Siddons had not quite emptied, and for which Martha obviously waited.

"If you're going out to the store, you might stop by and ask Lizzie Martin to step in the first chance she gets," said Mrs. Siddons as she yielded up the cup with a sigh of contentment and brushed a crumb from the capacious lap of her black alpaca dress. "Lizzie's pretty spry and knows my ways—not that I need such a deal of waiting on. And she's such a cheerful body!"

The last of her aunt's words were lost to Martha, but they smote her none the less. She was acutely aware that her aunt was already welcoming the prospect of the change—Lizzie Martin's sprightly loquaciousness in place of her own loyal, but dumb ministrations. Mrs. Siddons' tone frankly implied that there would now be some one in the house to talk to, who could talk as well.

Setting the dishes down in the sink, the girl, hurt to the core of her sensitive soul, gazed out upon the snow-clad landscape—the dull, familiar housetops and desolated back gardens which she had looked out upon for fifteen successive winters. As a child, she had had no choice but to accept her aunt's offer of a home, and to requite her in terms of service, paying out the

coin of her young life year after year in an unprotesting drudgery as tacitly accepted as it was mutely tendered.

As the *Iolanthe* steamed southward into warm airs and into seas which became blue and still more blue, Martha Dare was conscious of the passage of days crowded with so many new and bewildering experiences that already in retrospect they seemed a vast stretch of time. And at Santa Marta, the first port of call, she set foot on foreign soil still much as if in a dream, from which she might suddenly awake. Trusting to the capable direction of Mrs. Presbrey—her own cares for Muriel's comfort thus far had required absurdly small effort, so that Martha at times felt herself really a guest—they were driven away to the Alcazar Hotel.

The last of the twilight glow had faded from the sky, and the street, embowered in the strange, luxuriant foliage of the tropics, was a mass of deepening shadow and fugitive perfume.

The soft chime of the carriage bell, answering that of other vehicles that flanked or passed them, rang out with a strange sweetness wholly alien. Even the electric street light, which now and then pricked out in vivid green the heavy drooping fronds of the palms, glittered with an exotic radiance. The faint white of the roadway seemed to wind through interminable gardens, and then the serried blaze of lights of the Alcazar flashed into view.

The veranda was crowded, and in the gardens beyond, where the Caribbean lapped softly against the sea wall, an orchestra was playing. To Martha it seemed incredible that back in Pawhasset her aunt's little cottage could be lying blanketed in snow and whipped about by January gales.

"Why, Sydney Graham! Really? This is a surprise!"

Martha came out of her abstraction to observe that Mrs. Presbrey was



"Why, Sydney Graham!
Really? This is a
surprise!"

greeting a tall young man, who had detached himself from the throng on the hotel veranda.

"Saw your names were down on the *Iolanthe's* passenger list. Come now, own up you had quite forgotten that I had buried myself here in Santa Marta."

"Indeed I will not! You remember Muriel? And this is Miss Dare."

Martha diffidently put forth her hand and for a moment the young man's eyes swiftly appraised her before he turned again to Mrs. Presbrey's fire of ques-

tions. Martha gathered in a confused way from the interchange of talk that Sydney Graham had been "buried" for three years in Santa Marta, supervising a plantation owned by his uncle.

"You must let me motor you out there to-morrow," he was suggesting presently, and Martha was aware of his gray eyes again upon her, as if uncertain whether his invitation should include her. "Your boat doesn't sail till the following morning. You have the whole day ashore."

Mrs. Presbrey was graciously non-

committal. There were other half-formed plans, and perhaps the heat would prove too much for Muriel. In any case, the morrow would have to decide. She excused herself in order to look after their rooms for the night, drawing Martha after her and leaving Graham to look after Muriel until she rejoined them.

"Goodness, Syd, does every one down here get as brown as you are?" was Muriel's question, lightly shot at Graham as the other two withdrew. And in the answering laugh which it evoked Martha Dare sensed an old-time intimacy about to be renewed.

The thought awoke in her a sudden, odd pang. And yet the week on ship-board should have accustomed her to these light encounters with presentable young men, which Muriel seemed always ready for. Now, for the first time in her life, she felt acutely her own remoteness from things of that sort—a kind of feminine disqualification in the presence of men.

She dutifully followed Mrs. Presbrey upstairs. Through the open windows of their rooms, which looked out upon the shore, came the languorous music of the orchestra.

"I don't think I'll go down again to-night, Mrs. Presbrey," she announced at last, after the baggage had been disposed of.

Mrs. Presbrey turned to give her a quick look.

"Just as you like, Martha. I shall have to go down, if only to see that Sydney Graham doesn't keep Muriel up too late."

After breakfast on the following morning, Martha strolled out to the sea wall where the "trade" was briskly fretting the long line of coconut palms. Overhead arched a sky of burnished blue, flawless and immeasurably vast, in which a white sun blazed. Standing on the stone coping, the girl faced the crisp, stiffish breeze, drinking it in

deeply and tasting to the full its tang, like some rare, effervescent wine. A faint bloom was beginning to creep into her cheeks, and her eyes reflected something of the sapphire coloring of the sea. Her plain black dress whipped angularly about her ankles, the one thing which linked her now with Pawhasset.

She was unmindful of the people strolling past her—it was her instinctive habit to avoid looking at strangers—until abrupt footsteps and a confident salutation made her wheel round to find Mr. Graham confronting her with a blithe "good morning."

"Look here!" he began promptly. "I've just seen Mrs. Presbrey. Muriel doesn't feel equal to that motor ride, but you'll come, won't you?"

"Oh, but I couldn't—I couldn't leave Mrs. Presbrey! You see, I'm——" She hesitated, at a loss how to define her exact status.

"But I have already arranged it with Mrs. Presbrey. She says you are to go."

Martha blankly revolved this startling fact in her mind while Graham studied her curiously.

"You surely won't turn me down, too?" he coaxed her.

The girl took a reluctant step or two away from the sea wall, wholly uncertain as to how to deal with the situation.

"Just get a veil or something to tie over your hat. I don't believe you're the kind that's afraid of a little wind and sunshine."

Because she wanted very much to go, she debated with herself whether she ought not to decline. The rigid habit of years held her, the conscience of her New England forbears registering its unfailing protest against yielding to any natural, pleasurable desire.

Something of the conflict unconsciously betraying itself in her face led Graham to demand flatly:

"Don't you ever like to let yourself have a good time?"

To Martha it was like a sudden buffet on the cheek, and she crimsoned under it. And yet, the smile on his lips was ingratiating. She agreed to consult Mrs. Presbrey.

"I think you had better go, dear, since Mr. Graham has very kindly suggested it," was the lady's calm verdict. "There is to be a dance to-night, and Muriel would much rather save herself for that. I don't want her to overdo, you know. Don't you want to go?"

"Oh, yes, but——"

"But what? Run along, my dear. I shan't need you at all."

The car in which Graham awaited her proved to be a roadster, of low and rakish lines, but long and hard usage had given it a battered and unkempt air. The tires were worn, the wheels dusty, and a wooden case, which Graham had claimed that morning from the express office, made ungainly impedimenta, strapped on in the rear. He apologized for its presence, but Martha regarded it with a sort of welcome relief. It seemed to augur that Mr. Graham did not set great store by "looks."

She hoped he would not be too closely observant of her clothes, which for the first time in her life she was scanning with critical dissatisfaction. His own everyday attire she now observed to be an indifferent suit of gray, and on further inspection she decided that it was his clear-skinned, clean-cut face which gave him his distinction.

If she was bent on studying him, it could not be said that he did likewise. Once seated in the car, he seemed to accept her presence there as the most natural thing in the world, and he was at once voluble in his talk, which covered Martha's silence.

They were threading their way through the main street of Santa

Marta, passing the cathedral and the plaza, a progress marked by much twisting and turning, while Graham shifted gears and threw out bits of local intelligence much as if she were a tourist bent upon missing no point of interest.

"It's a rum country in some respects," he conceded, "but after you get used to the climate and to the ways of the natives——"

He was too busy just then to complete his sentence, maneuvering the car through a close-packed market throng of dusky faces which gave way indolently, almost sullenly, to the fretting motor.

"You can't imagine how good it is to have an occasional glimpse of people from home. Of course, there's always a bunch of tourists at the Alcazar, but I've grown pretty much away from that sort of society. Been sticking too close to the plantation and hard work, I suppose." He laughed suddenly in recollection. "Muriel Presbrey declares that I've gone completely to seed."

"You?" gasped Martha, astonished at the idea.

"I suppose I have changed a lot," Graham went on casually. "Before my uncle sent me down here I was an awful loafer. But then, it comes natural in New York to go in just for a good time. I'll confess I sometimes long for a bit of the old life. Hullo! There's a bit of real Manhattan now—the girl with the blond hair."

Martha looked up sharply and recognized a party of tourists from the *Iolanthe* coming out of a kodak shop, among them a girl in a smartly made dress of garnet.

"The girl is not so much," Graham expounded with masculine matter-of-factness. "But isn't that dress of hers stunning? What would you call it—wine-colored?"

"Yes, or garnet," answered Martha.

The dress seemed to achieve an oddly garish effect with its dull color, but ultramodish cut. Personally, Martha did not care for garnet, but Graham's masculine approval of it led her to consider it attentively.

"Well, it's a stunning color, I think," said he.

Martha wondered whether garnet would be a becoming shade to her. She had never considered clothes in quite that aspect. She remembered being dressed in black when her parents died, and she had clung to black for the most part ever since. It was a serviceable color and always acceptable to Paw-hasset.

The wine-colored dress lingered in the background of Martha's thoughts even after the car was clear of the town and out upon the hard highway which wound through a valley of tumultuous vegetation which filled her with increasing wonder and delight.

For the better part of an hour, the panorama unrolled itself before the eyes of the entranced girl, while Graham talked in uneven snatches and watched with sidelong glances her frank enjoyment of it all. From her unvoiced wonder he was beginning to divine something of her past cramped life and her craving hunger for beauty and freedom.

"You ought to stay down here three or four months. It would do you good."

Martha drew a sigh of longing.

"I could live here forever," she answered simply.

Everything seemed gloriously unreal in this land of blinding sunshine and exotic vegetation. Presently the stretches of the valley gave place to sharp ravines and waterfalls, and the road bent back and forth upon itself as it worked higher along the edge of the hills. The fairyland at Martha's feet became more magical as it shrank

away and dwarfed itself far beneath her. She could feel her veins throbbing insistently as if to refute her doubt of her own reality and that of the strange young man beside her. He was silent now, with a close eye to the narrow, precipitous roadway and the "hair-pin" turns.

From one of these vantage points they paused to survey the wide prospect. Santa Marta lay like a white toy town at the edge of the sea, which stretched away into a vast, sunlit haze. Graham pointed out the *Iolanthe*, its huge bulk dwarfed to ridiculous miniature. A tiny feather of smoke issued from its funnels. For a while they watched it in silence.

"It's too bad—your being here only for the day and gone to-morrow," Graham ventured at last, and then, as if to cover his words, he laughed. "But of course you're impatient to see the real show places of this part of the world, like *Capthagena*, *Caracas*, *Port of Spain*."

"They can't be more beautiful than this," said the girl slowly. "I shall always remember Santa Marta and this wonderful ride. It has been awfully kind of you."

"Please don't. That sounds as if you were already saying good-by," Graham objected. "I shall hope to see you again at the dance to-night at the *Alcazar*?"

Martha's eyes still watched the distant *Iolanthe*.

"I'm afraid not. You see, I don't dance."

"Neither do I—any longer, that is," said Graham. "We'll simply pair off and sit some of the dances out together."

Martha shook her head reluctantly.

"I should like to, but——"

"Oh, of course, you'll be there," interrupted Graham. "I'm afraid I'm not much on affairs of that sort any longer, but I'm going, and I shall certainly

count on seeing you—this one time more."

Martha was silent. She was making a mental inventory of the slender wardrobe contained in her steamer trunk, quite hopelessly aware that there was nothing in which she might dare to brave the ballroom of the pretentious Alcazar. She shut her mind resolutely against the thought.

Graham's car, a dusty white after the long climb into the hills, shot back into Santa Marta at a terrific pace. It was long after one o'clock, the luncheon hour at the hotel, as they had discovered all too late. For the first time in her life, Martha reflected, she was going to be guilty of tardiness, and, strangely enough, she did not greatly care.

She contemplated the spectacle of Mrs. Presbrey's finely penciled eyebrows lifted with pointed inquiry at her late appearance, but she experienced no qualm of conscience. She was loath to have the ride come to its speedy, inevitable end. She would have to thank



He made swift, deft probes into the corners of the opened trunk, with the air of performing a very needless piece of routine.

Mr. Graham for his kindness and say good-by. It was hardly likely that they would see each other again. There was, of course, the dance that evening at the Alcazar. If she had but a single dress that was presentable!

A sudden inspiration made her catch her breath. If she might ask Muriel Presbrey to lend her one of hers! But that was too audacious to be thought of, except for the brief instant in which the idea seized her. What would Mrs. Presbrey think? And why, indeed, this sudden impulsive desire to go to a dance where she would feel wholly out of place? She sank back against the leather-cushioned seat and folded her hands in resignation. But her fingers tightened as she pictured herself arrayed in the splendor of one of Muriel's gowns, bursting Cinderellalike upon the ballroom floor and startling no one so much as herself.

As the car skirted the plaza, the sunlight flashed in reflection from the show window of a draper's shop. There was a display of dress goods artfully arranged. Martha blinked, and then was suddenly aware of a wine-colored silk in the window as the car shot past.

"The very shade!" was the girl's quick thought. Her hand reached out to Graham's arm.

"Please! Let me out here!"

The car came to a grinding halt, and Graham turned in surprise.

"It's a bit of shopping that I simply must do before luncheon," the girl explained impetuously. "And no, you mustn't wait for me," she declared, as he backed the car to the curb. "It's only a step to the hotel, and I shall walk."

The prospect of a still further delay in facing Mrs. Presbrey's lifted eyebrows had been swept away with a host of other inhibitions. Her decision was made. She was mentally picturing the garnet silk—yes, and satin facings of cream—and an afternoon of feverish

activity with shears and a sewing machine which simply must be found somewhere.

"I think you're dropping me in pretty rum fashion," Graham gently reproached her.

"Oh, but I'll see you to-night at the dance," she called back gayly, and hastened into the shop. She was tingling with excitement. It was the very shade of garnet that had evoked his praise that morning. It pleased her that he should be mystified and a little hurt by her sudden urgency. Perhaps that night, arrayed in the wine-colored gown, she would explain.

Half an hour later, Martha reached the Alcazar, a little out of breath, her cheeks flushed from the noonday heat, but her eyes dancing. Under her arm she carried several parcels—the wine-colored silk, the cream satin, spools of thread, lining, hooks and eyes. A glance into the almost deserted dining-room told her that Muriel and Mrs. Presbrey must have eaten and departed. She ran up the two flights of stairs to find them awaiting her in their rooms.

As she opened the door, Mrs. Presbrey rose abruptly and came toward her, and for an instant Martha quailed at the prospect of following up her excuses with a plea for the afternoon in which to make the dress. She would never ask such a favor again. After that night, nothing really would matter. The *Iolanthe* might carry her to whatever lands it pleased. Ancient towns, strange islands—they were now indifferent to her. She wanted only to live the next few hours in her own way. After that she would be content to drop back into whatever empty round life held for her.

"But, my dear, let me first tell you something."

Mrs. Presbrey had put her arms around the girl in a strange, mothering sort of way. Martha, in the midst of her eager explanations, was puzzled.

If Mrs. Presbrey was really angry with her, it was an odd way to administer reproof. She hesitated and looked up wonderingly. There was a grave look in the older woman's eyes. Mrs. Presbrey's hand soothingly stroked her shoulder.

"I don't think you will want to go to the dance when you understand," Mrs. Presbrey was saying slowly. To the girl it was like a voice speaking from an infinite distance. "A cable-gram has just come for you. It's bad news, my dear. Your aunt is dead."

For an instant the girl's eager joy tottered as if on the brink of an abyss, and then plunged downward, like the packages which fell from her lifeless hands.

"I thought very likely you would prefer to go back and sleep on board the vessel to-night—away from all the commotion, the festivities and music. It will be a relief to you, I feel sure, when we are again out to sea."

"Again out to sea——" echoed the girl dully. The light in her eyes had gone out.

The decks were gay once more with games of shuffleboard and ringtoss, as the *Iolanthe* steamed southward on the following morning. Only a stray binocular or two idly scanned the hazy line of hills astern, now fast merging into the horizon. Santa Marta was already a memory.

Martha Dare, in a deck chair in a secluded corner, where Mrs. Presbrey had bestowed her and then considerately left her to herself, seemed immersed in a vast apathy. It is true she had cried a little, and tears were a rare occurrence in her life. She was not given to analyzing her own emotions, but now she sat wondering if she were heartless in not feeling more grief at the sudden death of her aunt. She knew that hers had been a perfunctory service during the years she had

drudged for and waited on the crippled woman, just as Mrs. Siddons' taking of the orphan child under her roof had been a reluctant recognition of the ties of blood.

The bond between them had been as tenuous as that, and the years had done little to strengthen it between the garrulous, invalid woman and the brooding, taciturn girl. Martha had at times reproached herself for a lack of sympathy and love toward her aunt, but her efforts to break down the barrier between them had always been futile. Even now her grief sprang less from a sense of personal loss than from a feeling of long, frustrated effort at last ended.

As she gazed dully out to sea, she felt in each beat of the ship's propeller an answering throb in the void of her own heart. Something in the depths of her being had started suddenly into life, and now lay bruised and broken. She had never really wanted to live before, as she had thrilled to the prospect of those few brief hours which had been denied her at Santa Marta. If she could have gone to the dance, if for a single night she might have been permitted to play Cinderella to her prince, she felt that she could have been content on the morrow to return to her rags and ashes. She was too inured to a life of drab emptiness to ask more than that.

But fate had played her a cruel trick in the timing of its blow. She had gone back to the *Iolanthe* and spent the night in her stateroom, as Mrs. Presbrey had suggested. She had not had the courage to ask whether Mr. Graham had inquired as to her absence. She told herself despondently that she had yielded to a vain, romantic impulse at the door of the draper's shop. In her trunk, thrust indifferently away, lay her unopened purchases; but the wine-colored silk still hung upon her thoughts. It had become useless baggage, a foolish extravagance, a mockery of garnet

brightness which would never know the touch of shears. She wondered if Sydney Graham would have liked her in it.

In the days that followed she devoted herself assiduously to Muriel, striving to multiply the small duties and demands upon herself. These, indeed, increased as Muriel, rallying back to almost boisterous health, began to take an active part in the social life about her. There were dances and masquerades, and Martha's needle was busy contriving costumes and altering dresses. There were repeated visits to the Presbrey's trunks, stored far down in the ship's hold, where Martha went to retrieve some bit of filmy finery which Muriel's capricious wish demanded.

At the various ports there were shore parties and little excursions, but Martha took no part in them. She remained a solitary, black-clad figure in the background, and when the throng went ashore, a gay tide of carefree, adventuring youth, she remained aboard the vessel, to sit for hours in the long line of deserted deck chairs, indifferent to the palm-fringed shores and crumbling Spanish towns which beckoned her. It was as if life had eluded her one bold grasp to seize it and now lay wholly behind her, a thing of poignant and bitter-sweet memory. There remained the tangible mockery of the wine-colored silk. She hadn't had the courage to take it from its wrappings, and it lay buried in the depths of her trunk. She tried to forget that it existed.

She did, indeed, ignore its presence there when called upon to fill out the customs declaration which the purser put into her hands a day or two before the vessel reached New York. Bewildered by the unfamiliar, official paper, Mrs. Presbrey had briefly enlightened her:

"It's just a form which has to be filled out, my dear. Of course you have nothing to declare. Wearing apparel

and such things—whatever you brought with you—is passed free."

Martha accordingly signed her name to the paper and turned it in to the purser. She had declared nothing.

It was not until the *Iolanthe* was being warped into her berth at the Hoboken docks that Martha awoke to what she had done. Standing in the crowd of tourists impatiently pressing toward the gangplanks, she chanced to overhear two women in conversation.

"I haven't really bought a thing," one of them was confiding to the other "except a piece of white serge. Those beautiful English serges—you remember?—at Port of Spain. They were so cheap I couldn't resist taking home enough for a couple of suits."

"I hope you remembered to run your shears through it and cut it roughly to pattern of some sort," the other interrupted. "You have to pay duty on dress goods in the piece."

A steward laden with hand luggage crowded by, and Martha did not hear more. But in dismay she thought of the wine-colored silk in her trunk. Should she tell Mrs. Presbrey? Or was it too late to do anything? But just now it was impossible to find Mrs. Presbrey. The gangplanks were down, and Martha was caught in the swirl that carried her ashore.

A bewildering interval followed, in which Martha found herself swept uncertainly about. Trunks swung aloft and plunged down from the deck of the *Iolanthe*—huge, incredible mounds of luggage, to be caught up and trundled here and there. They rattled past on hand trucks in every direction. Trunks were being opened and their contents pawed over by the inspectors. Other trunks were being locked and strapped again and whisked away to where a clamorous throng of baggage agents strove for them.

A voice presently sounded in Martha's ear, and she turned to recog-

nize an elderly gentleman who had done her one or two small services during the voyage. He had divined something of her bewilderment and was offering to assist. He found her trunk almost instantly. It lay only a few steps away, as she now discovered, under a large letter "D." Then he led her to the chief inspector's desk. A paper was suddenly before her, and the official was demanding if that was her signature. Then the paper was in the hands of another official-looking person. Martha, confused and uncomprehending, was borne back to her trunk.

Ought she to explain now about the wine-colored silk to the bored-looking inspector? He was impatiently watching the efforts of the friendly gentleman to open her trunk. He shot some question at her, which Martha caught only in part—something about cigars and liquors. Then he made swift, deft probes into the corners of the opened trunk, punched contemptuously Martha's humble array of clothing, which was mercilessly exposed to view. He had the air of performing a very needless piece of routine. The next instant the trunk was closed and the official was sticking a bit of paper upon it. Mrs. Presbrey was suddenly at Martha's elbow.

"What—through already? This is very kind of you, Mr. Dickinson," she thanked the gentleman at her side.

"No trouble at all. Glad to have been of service to Miss Dare."

Martha smiled gratefully. She still did not understand, but it was evident from the actions of Mrs. Presbrey, who now took charge of her, that the queer formalities of the customs inspection were over with. And she had missed her chance to explain about the wine-colored silk. Perhaps the lady whom she had overheard on deck had been wrong, or she herself had not rightly understood. In any case, she had no intention of ever making use of that

piece of silk. Perhaps if she had confessed that fact to the inspector it would have been quite satisfactory. It was in reality just as if she had flung the gay finery overboard, which she had been several times tempted to do.

Pawhasset had once more become a reality for Martha Dare, and the winter cruise only a dream. Life caught her back into its eventless round of colorless hours, and the habits of years resumed their sway. The little cottage in Willow Street had at first seemed strangely empty, but a tyrannous presence still pervaded it. Martha went about her daily tasks as painstakingly as if her every movement had still to undergo the sharp surveillance of her aunt. The brass knocker on the front door gleamed as brightly as ever under her polishing, and when spring came, the little front garden bloomed again with tulips and daffodils, each in its accustomed spot. Martha, on her knees with trowel and flowerpots, dreamed of slender, feathery palms and flaming masses of poinsettia. The glory of the road up into the Santa Marta hills would rise before her, with its vistas of tropic splendor viewed from Sydney Graham's car, and, with arrested trowel she would fall to brooding.

Forbidden thoughts, these. They led always to the mad climax of the wine-colored dress, now her secret torture, for she was at last clearly aware that she had smuggled it through the customs, and she understood the enormity of this offense. Hardly a week after her return, headlines on the front page of a New York paper caught her eye, and she had read with suddenly awakened consternation of how a woman had been apprehended for smuggling. For a day or two the papers sensationally exploited the story, and Martha tremblingly read every word. Long after the last echoes of the affair had died out, she still hunted feverishly



"I was sayin' to Lizzie this mornin', that's the most gorgeous row of hollyhocks I ever seen."

through the columns for further details, and she preserved as a final commentary and indictment of her own act, a lurid page from a Sunday supplement in which were assembled, with fantastic art embellishment, the spectacular smuggling crimes of three decades.

Now that Mrs. Presbrey had gone to Maine for the summer, there was no one to whom the girl could turn to unburden her harassed mind. The cold, immutable fact of her guilt lay locked in her breast. The law held that she had committed a crime, which she was keeping secret. The thought haunted her as she bent over the kitchen sink, washing the few dishes after her evening meal, and stalked upstairs with her to bed, like the stealthy shadow which her candle end made. She would lie wide-eyed in the dark, while her conscience assailed her. She was guilty of no ordinary theft; she had defrauded the government. Hers was a penal offense. Early in the morning she would escape out of doors to work in

the sunshine among her flowers, but the thought stole to her side and whispered into her ear.

She shunned the empty spare room upstairs, where stood her aunt's cedar chest, in which, buried deep from sight, lay the wine-colored silk. She even passed the locked door of the room with nervous step and bated breath, as if the evidence of her guilt were taking on some monstrous living form and would yet break forth and destroy her.

As the weeks passed, it was observed in Pawhasset that "Marty Dare" was looking "sort of peaked." Neighbors assumed that she was grieving overmuch because of her aunt's death, but they left her to herself; the period of neighborly commiseration had long since ended. From the adjoining yard Mrs. Martin watched the listless movements of the girl, who would pause in her weeding to stare dumbly into space. The old lady would sometimes step through the gap in the board fence and come over into Martha's garden.

"Land's sake, Marty! You oughtn't to be workin' out here in this hot sun. In August, too, when there's nothin' in a garden that needs tendin' to. You're wearin' yourself down to skin and bone."

"I like it out here—better than in the house," answered Martha dispiritedly.

"You ought to be out and around more—a young girl like you," counseled the other. "To my thinkin', there ain't no real company in just flowers. Not that yours don't look real nice. I was sayin' to Lizzie this mornin', that's the most gorgeous row of hollyhocks I ever seen. Such wonderful dark colorin'! Why, they're just the color of wine!"

Martha's face went white as she suddenly looked up at the tall, nodding hollyhocks. The color of wine! They were, indeed, a match for the smuggled silk, hidden in the cedar chest upstairs. There was something sinister and accusing in their color, as if their dark beauty flaunted to the world the stain of her crime. She got up hastily from her knees and led Mrs. Martin away from the spot. The hollyhocks had become hateful to her sight. She felt that she could never bear to look upon them again. Late that night, under cover of darkness, she stole out from the house and tore the offending flowers from their stalks.

Except for brief errands to the store, she now seldom left the cottage. She shrank more than ever from meeting people until even her attendance at church on Sunday mornings was an ordeal, from which she escaped as soon as the last word of the benediction was pronounced. The minister's eyes in the pulpit rested upon her accusingly, and in every sermon there were words of scorching accusation which seemed spoken directly to her. She began to ask herself whether it was not wickered for her to go to church and take her

place in the congregation while she continued to conceal her sin. The following Sunday her seat was vacant.

She timorously thought of writing to Mrs. Presbrey, but she had neither the courage nor the skill to commit so difficult a matter to words, and she dreaded to intrust her damning confession to the mails. What could Mrs. Presbrey do? The newspapers had made it all too clear that neither wealth nor station could stay the arm of the outraged law. And to make a confidant of any one in the village might only lead to her ultimate detection by the authorities. She now knew that they kept secret watch over tourists who had returned from abroad.

Alone and helpless in her plight, she strove vainly to conjure up some way to make restitution for her deed, sought to evolve some heavy penance which she might mercilessly lay upon herself and find ease of conscience under the scourge of self-inflicted punishment. But she could devise nothing. There was no escape, no future but the dark possibility that under the persistent torture of her guilt she might at last be goaded to confession, with its dread sequel of courtroom and prison.

October had come, and the hollyhock stalks in the garden rattled dryly in the crisp air. Martha, engaged in putting various things away for the winter, had mustered her courage to enter the spare room and to open the cedar chest. It gave forth a faint, familiar odor of her aunt's lavender sachet, and as her hands moved tremblingly among linens and old quiltings, they touched the flat parcel in its crumpled paper wrappings. Once more the impulse was hot upon her to drag forth the wine-colored silk and destroy it. She caught it up in a sort of fury, only to waver and at last to clasp the parcel convulsively to her breast.

It was pregnant with memories—her one tangible memento of Santa Marta

and Sydney Graham. She crushed it to her with a fierce, vindictive affection. She knew she could never part with it, despite the secret torture of its possession. It was too inextricably a part of the one supremely happy, shattered day of her life, which she still shamefully dared live again in her dreams. Even now she yielded to the vision of herself arrayed in the wine-colored silk and gliding out upon the ballroom floor of the Alcazar in the arms of Sydney Graham.

She failed to hear the motor car which had halted in front of the cottage, the quick steps up the walk, and the eager thump upon the brass knocker. The summons was repeated twice before she was aware that some one was seeking admittance at the front door. A peddler, thought Martha, annoyed. She resented the intrusion at just that moment. The knocker sounded again. Martha did not stir from where she knelt before the cedar chest. She detested peddlers. She waited to hear the intruder's footsteps retreating up the walk.

Instead, a clear, masculine voice, calling to some one, reached her through the open window:

"Isn't this where Miss Dare lives?"

Martha recognized the voice and gasped. Then she heard Mrs. Martin from the adjoining yard explaining to the young man that "Miss Marty must have stepped out to the store," but that he would not have long to wait.

It seemed, however, that the young man could not wait, or rather was hopeful that he might meet her coming from the store. To the old lady's prying curiosity he yielded up the additional fact that he was on his way to West Aylesford—a pressing matter of business with his uncle—and was already late because of a breakdown. But he would be back in Pawhasset that evening. It was this fact which he had stopped to tell Miss Dare.

Up in the spare room, Martha made no move from where she sat, now a bewildered heap on the floor, with pulses throbbing heavily and ears tense to every word of the dialogue below. Now she heard the whir of the motor's engine.

"In case I shouldn't meet Miss Dare, won't you please tell her that I called—Sydney Graham, she may remember, from Santa Marta. I'll find her at home this evening, won't I?"

To Martha's dismay, the old lady opined that he would not. It was the night of the Harvest Home festival at the church parlors, with all Pawhasset in attendance.

"Tain't likely she'd be stirrin' out by herself," Mrs. Martin conceded, "but the minister asked me particular to see that Miss Marty went, so I'm plannin' to take her, along with three chocolate cakes I got bakin' in the oven now."

Graham laughed.

"Then tell Miss Dare I'll be at the social, too. I want very much to see her. In fact, I've come nearly two thousand miles just for that."

For a long time after the sound of the motor car had died out, Martha sat as if in a daze, her head buried in her arms, which rested upon the edge of the open chest. Sydney Graham, instead of being thousands of miles away in Santa Marta, was actually in Pawhasset and asking for her. Mrs. Martin would be bustling in presently with the message. Sydney Graham had come two thousand miles, he had said, just to see her. This fact filled and overflowed her mind, to the exclusion of all else. And he would be seeking her that night at the church social.

She had weakly demurred when Mrs. Martin, a day or two before, had urged her to go. Inwardly she had resolved that she would not. But now there could be no question of her going. Sydney Graham would be there.

But her clothes! The thought gave

her a sudden sobering check. She had nothing to wear but her worn and dragged black. Her Sunday gown would be wholly out of place at the festival, even in the uncritical eyes of Pawhasset. But it was not of Pawhasset that she was thinking just then.

Temptation suddenly assailed her. The wine-colored silk! She shivered in a sort of terror. To go forth brazenly in the smuggled silk—did she dare? To flaunt her very crime before the eyes of all Pawhasset! For months she had shrunk from the very thought of ever touching it again. Folds of soft garnet brightness now peeped through the loosened paper wrappings. Sydney Graham had admired that very shade. And how often in her dreams she had visioned herself in it. There was not a seam or tuck of the imagined gown that did not stand out vividly before her. It would be the work of but a few hours to transform it into a reality.

She sprang to her feet without being aware that her decision had been born out of a turmoil of conflicting feelings. To the cries of her outraged conscience she ruthlessly shut her ears as she went blindly about her task. She did not want to think just then. She carried the silk downstairs and spread it out upon the dining-room table—the cream-colored satin, the thread, the lining, all were there ready at hand. She caught up her workbasket in a tremble of eagerness, as if her resolution might not hold, and, seizing the shears, she began to cut.

As the bright blades cleaved their way through the soft fabric, a strange feeling began to course through her veins. It was as if with each stroke of the shears something tight and hard gave way within her cramped and tortured soul. She could feel the snapping of innumerable tense cords which had bound her. It was as if she were cutting her way out of a maze of guilty

fears and restraints in which she had struggled enmeshed for weary months. Bits of silk fell to the floor, discarded like her own morbid imaginings. The dress began to take form under her swift fingers, and her heart leaped in a new ecstasy of freedom.

There were knocks at the kitchen door, which she heard, but ignored. No interruption could stay her now. She was sensing the joy of a strange liberation; life, like a returning tide, warm, eager, exultant, thrilled through her body. Presently the sewing machine whirled under the swift pressure of her feet, and her fingers flew with a fierce dexterity. She attacked the cream-colored satin, slashing it almost recklessly and fashioning it with a daring and inspiration born of her new-found self.

The afternoon shadows lengthened across the floor and waned, but Mariha worked on. Dusk crept about her, still bending over her task, which she had carried to a window in order to catch the last of the twilight glow. At length, however, she paused and leaned back in her chair, pressing her fingers against her aching eyes. How dark the room had become! Even the disordered table and the litter of silk remnants upon the floor were almost indistinguishable. She had taken no count of the hours. But it lay across her lap, finished at last—the dress of her dreams.

As she sat in the darkness, however, resting her wearied back and cramped fingers, she realized that her first joy in her work had ebbed. Old troublings of conscience began once more to stir. In dismay she caught up the dress and fled to her room, trying to still the inner voice which again assailed her. Lighting a lamp, she tremblingly put on the wine-colored dress, telling herself that she must not give way now. Her resolution faltered and failed. The garnet and silver radiance of the silk was dimmed. She had yielded to a

foolish vanity, which she knew she must put forever from her.

The knocker on the front door sounded. Martha started and trembled. She would have to go down and tell Mrs. Martin that she could not go to the church social, make some plea of illness or other excuse. But the dress! There was no time to slip it off, for the knocker was impatiently summoning her again. Fortunately, in the darkness of the hall the strange dress might escape close observation. Martha carried the lamp downstairs into the living room, and then, summoning her courage, went to the front door and opened it.

"Oh!" she gasped, blankly confronting, instead of Mrs. Martin, the tall figure of Sydney Graham.

"Didn't the lady next door tell you? I dropped in, hoping to catch you before you started."

"I'm not going to the church," Martha faltered, retreating a step from the doorway.

"Not going?" he echoed. "Well, perhaps then——"

He seemed to wait for her to continue, but Martha, helplessly backing into the refuge of the dark hallway, could find no words except a perfunctory "Would you like to come in?"

He followed her into the living room, where they faced each other again, now in the full radiance of the lamplight. His eyes lighted with sudden pleasure.

"How beautiful you look!" he exclaimed. "Just the way I've been picturing you all these months!"

"Don't!" the girl quavered. She sank down upon a chair, bursting into tears and burying her face in her hands.

Graham, bewildered, could only stand helplessly over her bowed figure.

"Is anything wrong?" he ventured. "You can tell me, can't you?"

Martha suddenly looked up, realizing that here at last was some one whom she dared tell. She checked her sobs,

and little by little the crime of the smuggled silk was revealed.

Graham was tempted to laugh, but he refrained. In the absurd, pitiful little confession he sensed the measure of her misery and months of self-torture.

"But, my dear, this can easily be set right, and nobody need ever know. You can send the money to the government without disclosing your name. Didn't you ever hear of what they call the 'conscience fund'?" As he went on to explain how she might make restitution and rectify the wrong, a light dawned in the girl's wet eyes.

"And to think that I could have done that months ago!"

"Yes, and then have worn out the dress long before I should have had the chance to see you in it," he selfishly objected.

Martha shook her head with decision.

"I didn't intend ever to wear it. I made that resolve the very day I bought the goods in Santa Marta."

"But you *are* wearing it," insisted Graham. His eyes, which had been indifferent to the open sewing machine and the litter of dressmaking on the disordered table, now scanned sharply the telltale garnet remnants upon the floor.

"Why, it looks as if you had only just finished making it!"

Martha did not answer, but her cheeks flamed and her eyes fell abashed under his searching look of surprise.

Then enlightenment began slowly to dawn upon his masculine understanding. He got up and came toward her, taking her gently into his arms. He strove to frame a question.

"Tell me—my coming back here—Martha, do you really mean——"

Her head fell forward in refuge upon his shoulder.

"Haven't I confessed enough?" she sighed in a sort of glad weariness and peace.



WHAT THE STARS SAY

by Madame Renée Longuille

To the Heavens above us O look and behold
The Planets that love us, all harnessed in gold!
What chariots, what horses against us shall bide
While the stars in their courses do fight on our side?

RUDYARD KIPLING.

HOW TO READ YOUR OWN HOROSCOPE

LESSON VI.

THE planet Neptune was not discovered until 1848, so that comparatively little is known, as yet, of its influence on the inhabitants of the Earth. It is at a very great distance from the Sun, from which it gets very little light, a fact which strengthens the idea that Neptune probably belongs to a different solar system from ours. In a nativity, Neptune seems to have little or no effect in working through any zodiacal sign, but may be judged according to the house in which it is poised and also by the aspects it receives from other planets. Highly developed souls seem to respond to Neptune's vibrations for good. In a peculiar way this mysterious planet seems to strengthen the vibrations for good or ill of any other planet very near or in conjunction with it. If Venus happens to mingle its rays with those of Neptune, peculiar attachments and attractions will be the result. A dull, dark blue, deeper than either Jupiter's or Saturn's, is its color.

This planet is supposed to belong to a much higher stage of development and spiritual influence than any of the other

planets. However, the abuse of its influence may result in much evil and depravity. People of a purely Neptune type are generally thin, spiritual, and high-strung, with a dreamy, far-away look in the eyes, and a weary, worn expression on their faces.

After taking into account the particular nature of the planets in question, the sign of the zodiac in which the planets are situated has much to do in bringing out or subduing their influence. Each planet has its congenial sign in which its best or strongest effects are manifest, while some zodiacal signs tend to retard or weaken its vibrations. The sign in which a planet works unhampered and attains its full natural effect is called in Astrology its "House," but the sign in which it reaches its very highest power and strength is called its "Exaltation." The constellation which subdues or weakens a planet's natural strength is termed its "Detriment," and the sign in which a planet has little or no effect is called its "Fall." The importance of knowing at a glance whether or not the position of a planet is a help

or hindrance in its expression may be readily seen. Thus a very simple, explicit table may be necessary for reference.

TABLE OF PLANETS AND THEIR SIGNS.

Planets	House	Exaltation	Detriment	Fall
☉	♌	♈	♊	♍
☽	♋	♏	♍	♊
♃	♈, ♌	♏	♊	♍
♄	♈, ♌	♏	♊	♍
♅	♈, ♌	♏	♊	♍
♆	♈, ♌	♏	♊	♍
♇	♈, ♌	♏	♊	♍
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In each individual horoscope the planets are found to be poised in different signs and houses, and, as these stars shine from the heavens, they mingle their rays with one another. Astrology argues that the particular slant of the rays and the distances between these celestial bodies have certain effects which are called "Aspects." For centuries astrologers have measured these aspects and noted their effects until they came to the conclusion that some were ill, some good, and others variable, according to the nature of the planet in question. Each aspect is represented for convenience by a symbol. It also has a name and a particular nature, as, for instance, the "conjunction"—☿—when two heavenly bodies are very near each other.

The character of this aspect varies. Supposing two good, benefic planets came to the same point in the zodiac; their combined influence for good would surely signify harmonious vibrations. But should a malefic planet meet another evil star the influence transmitted would be adverse. By understanding the natures of the planets the aspect of conjunction may be readily interpreted in terms of character as well as fate. "P"

stands for the aspect termed "parallel," or an equal distance in declination either north or south from the equator, and is like the aspect conjunction both in nature and effect.

Of course, these aspects are strongest when exact, but five degrees within precision may also be noted. The aspects termed "good" are those in which planets measure a distance of one hundred and twenty degrees apart, called "trine"—△—and sixty degrees apart, called "sextile"—✱. Half of this last distance, or thirty degrees apart, is a feebly good aspect called "semi-textile"—V.

The so-called evil aspects on a nativity are generally found to be lessons we are set to learn and master in life. As we were born into the world bringing with us these obstacles to overcome, it is natural to suppose that they are tasks we have not completed in former lives, and that we are once more given a chance here to do what we can to learn the rules. It is undoubtedly more philosophical, then, to consider these "evil" aspects as work to be done to bring us nearer happiness and perfection. Thus, in a broad sense, they cannot be judged as completely evil, for surely these burdens and so-called afflictions are, in the long run, woven into our lives for eventual good. A very wise and clever woman has said "Sorrow and sadness are friends in disguise."

Two planets cannot be more than one hundred and eighty degrees apart, and when they reach this limit they are said to be "in opposition"—♁—which is considered the most powerful aspect in astrology. Its influence is very much like that of Saturn and, as its name implies, it causes opposition, separation, and antagonism.

The "square"—☐—is that aspect in which two planets are about ninety degrees apart. This is another evil aspect, its influence being more or less like that of the planet Mars. Evil aspects signify

discord, ignorance, and an incomplete state of affairs. We suppose that this aspect, based upon the square, must represent war, discord, agitation, and conflict, often ending suddenly with a shock. There are a few other very weak aspects for good and ill, but the ancient astrologers ignored these.

The three principal centers in reading a "chart of life" are the Sun, the Moon, and the Ascendant or rising sign. The Sun, that giver of life and light, is taken to represent the individuality or soul of the native. The interpretation of this great luminary in the various signs of the zodiac has been given at length in previous writings.

The second to consider is the Moon, the sign in which it is placed, and also its distance from the Sun. The Moon signifies the personality. Its influence over the nervous system is well known. When the Moon is found in Aries it partakes of the nature of that sign and the native with the Moon thus poised will be quick, impulsive, and unwilling to take orders from others in any way. He is likely to have a decided hobby and to pursue it with great courage and daring. At times he will be hard to please and become irritable and angry. He may change his mind as his impulse dictates. The rules and regulations of organized society do not appeal to his independent, aggressive spirit. At some time in life he may find himself in a position of great responsibility where much will depend on his decision and ability.

As Aries rules the head, great care should be taken to avoid worry and all feverish diseases which would be likely to affect this part of the anatomy. Oftentimes the mother of the native with the Moon in Aries will play a very important part in the life, but not necessarily a fortunate one. He might hold different opinions from those of his father and mother or be separated from them early in life by death or some other cause. At some time in life he may have

to endure scandal, or perhaps this indication may take the form of some secret which must be guarded, much against his good judgment.

The Moon in the sign Taurus denotes quite a different kind of personality. This nature would show very quiet, amiable, but determined traits. Although his aim in life would be as true as one of the Aries type, the slow, persistent way in which he accomplished it would be quite the reverse. He will pay more attention to convention and customs than the average person, but at the same time he will not be very susceptible to the varying influences about him. Taurus is the natural sign of money, therefore one with the Moon poised in this sign may accumulate a great deal of this world's goods. The occupation may be peculiar or considered mysterious or even of low class, but financial success follows just the same, unless very clearly denied in some other part of the horoscope.

The native with the Moon in Taurus may live by the ocean or on a river and his work may be concerned with the watery element. This position of the Moon somewhat favors marriage, and inclines the native to artistic tastes. Friends, as well as brothers and sisters, may be numerous and beneficial.

If Gemini, the sign of intellect, contains the Moon, a love of reading and writing is given to the person indicated. Books are a source of great pleasure to him and study is not difficult. It would be fortunate for a native with this position to pursue any literary or scientific work. He will probably be very active physically and unable to stay in one place for very long. His days will be full of activity. Short journeys will often be taken, and while he is in one place his thoughts will be in another. Change and change again is the nature, and by it the best qualities are manifested and the best work accomplished, because it is as natural to this native to

move as it is to the native of the preceding sign to resist change. However, an afflicted Moon in Taurus may show the adverse qualities of a changeable mind and make one "double-faced," as we say. Very often this native will resemble the mother both mentally and physically.

The Moon in Cancer produces a very home-loving soul with a sense of luxury and ease about him. The native with that position of the Moon will be a wonderful week-end entertainer, always knowing just how to cater to the comforts of all those who are so fortunate as to come under his roof. He will probably fall in with the ways and habits of his guest, rather than set up household rules to which the guest will have to conform. Although this is the home-sign of the zodiac, it often seems that the irony of fate thrusts a person born with the Moon poised here much into the public eye, most often in an artistic way. Actors often have this position on the natal map, and it leads to success. The person will be supersensitive and often jealous. This being a watery sign and the Moon also representing liquids, their position together would indicate one who will live most of his life near the water or travel a great deal by water. The Moon in Cancer tends to increase the number of children in a nativity.

Answers to Correspondence

Miss M. M. R., Born March 8, 1901, at 7 p. m., Omaha, Neb.—You were born with the Sun in Pisces and the Moon in Libra. This position of the stars denotes a wonderful imagination, which will be held in check and made good use of. Your nature is psychic and very mediumistic, and you may notice how readily you sense the emotions and feelings of friends with whom you come in contact. Try to overcome this, for it may lead you to be too sympathetic with them, and this is bound to do you more harm than good. This year, 1920, there are many, many influences starting to work in your life, but, although I think your mind will be active and energetic, I find there are great obstacles and oppositions which can be surmounted if you

start out now. There seems to be a tightness of money and lack of judgment around you which proves a real handicap. I would advise you to be quiet until next year, when I am sure you will find yourself blossoming out in good fortune and well-being, and this fortunate period continues throughout the next year, 1922. When you are about twenty-two, be extremely careful of your health.

I am glad that you follow the lessons in astrology so carefully. The knowledge will help you later in your career.

A BABY, Born March 18, 1920, at 7:05 p. m., Richmond, Ind.—This baby was born with the Sun and Moon in Pisces, which will give her a very quiet and silent nature, perhaps not much in evidence now, but sure to develop later. She will have a wonderful power of deep, profound thought which may lead to the study of occult or mystical subjects. She will never stay away from the water for any length of time, and will delight in being in it and on it. I predict a great deal of traveling and change of residence for her. Saturn is in the sign Virgo afflicted. Great care must be taken of the solar plexus, and diet is most important. Any nervousness or shock will cause cramps and pains in this region. She will not be likely to endure any physical hardships. There is a very strong likelihood of genius being manifested.

Mr. G. A. M., Born October 14, 1894, at 2 p. m., Barberton, Ohio.—You were born with the sun in Libra and the Moon in Aries. The Sun was in parallel to Saturn and in opposition to the Moon. These aspects give you a steady, sober character with good balancing power, and a rather ambitious, forceful personality. You will generally see things in the right light and will be very clever in making comparisons. Jupiter was exalted in Cancer, and from this and other indications I should say that you would make a very successful lawyer, or would prosper in business along legal or professional lines. Your mind is somewhat erratic and given to lines of thought out of the ordinary—sometimes of an inventive and original quality. The map is not good for marriage, which will probably not occur until late in life, and then to some one older and more serious in disposition than yourself. In the period between your fifteenth and sixteenth year a great benefic influence and change came into your life. You are in this year—1920—passing under the influence of the Sun in conjunction with Uranus and Mercury. Something will occur during the next two years which will bring you great responsibility, change of work and abode.



Pioneers

By Rheem Douglas

IT is fine in the open this morning, dear ;
The air is still, not a treetop rocks ;
All month have the crocuses shrunk with fear
In their saffron satin frocks ;

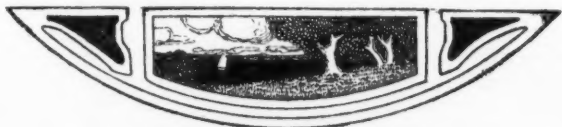
But comes this day when the clouds drift high
In a languid blue, and the winds are mute,
And the peach boughs offer the butterfly
Blossoms like fairy fruit.

And the first white butterfly's there to see
And tremble about on its frail, pale wing—
More idle, true, than the worthy bee,
But, ah, such a dainty thing!

And the first bold thrush is at home to-day,
And thrilling the garden with his cry,
And his russet breast, like a leaf at play
On a frost-burned maple high.

Virgin gold of the springtime sun,
First pink bough—and a robin here!
Sweet, shall I be the only one
Failing to pioneer?

I would be first to find a way
To your young heart's country, scarce known, divine;
May I come in the light of this radiant day,
Reach it, and call it mine?



Merely a Matter of Form

By Howard Philip Rhoades

Author of "His Older Love," "The Versatile Vamp," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY H. T. DENISON

A love affair incognito—a delightful story, with the stage for its background.

THEIR acquaintance came into being as suddenly as the shower which was its cause. The man had glanced at her more than once since she entered the Fifth Avenue bus near Fiftieth Street, but he had made no effort to attract her attention.

Once, after they ran into a spring rain while crossing west toward Broadway, he looked and saw she had no umbrella. But he made no further sign until she rose, just as the bus was about to turn west again toward Riverside Drive.

As she paused at the door waiting to step into the gusty downpour, he was at her side. Two or three women stared in wonder at a girl who would expose such an outfit to the rain. But she took no notice. She was filled with a will to reach some destination which would not brook delay. Her hand was on the rail and she was about to step down when he spoke.

"May I offer my umbrella?"

Her face betrayed a slight irritation, the evidence of a deeply rooted feeling, as she turned. But there was that in his pleasant manner which banished her first impulse to decline, and she smiled and nodded.

So it was that the pouring rain completely missed her. Holding the umbrella carefully over her, the young man steered her to the sidewalk, with a grasp of her arm which was as delicate and considerate as it was firm. His attitude won her, for she smiled almost

personally as she indicated a small restaurant near by.

In the shelter of its doorway she began to thank him, and he asked, again with the smile which had won her:

"You are going to meet some one?"

"Why——" she hesitated. "No," she hurried on.

"I was on my way to dinner, also," he said, "but it's several blocks, and—can't I be driven in by the rain with you?"

"Well—I——"

"Come," he said, answering the question by drawing her inside. She smiled to herself, as they went to a table, contrasting her reception of his advances with her recent treatment of other men.

Yet, as she thought it over, it was not so strange, for this man, whose name she had not yet learned, was pleasing to her. There was a virile, youthful light in his dark eyes, a breeziness about his thick brown hair, and an athletic set to his shoulders which seemed to speak to her of a broader, simpler place which she had left behind to come to the greatest of cities. And yet this primal freshness was touched everywhere by the polish of the metropolis.

It all blended into a fascination not to be explained in the mere fact that she was his opposite, with golden hair and blue eyes, and the sort of finely rounded physique which by intuition seeks its like. There was something beyond which made her smile when he

smiled, and made her interested as he again began to speak.

"This is, of course, a little irregular," he said, "but, you know there are lots of people in New York who would enjoy each other immensely if they dared get acquainted. But most of them are backward about speaking—and never know what they miss."

"Now," she said, returning his smile reprovingly, "I hoped you wouldn't be a bouquet thrower."

"I'm not," he said. "Please don't take me for an ordinary flirt. You're the first——"

"Careful," she warned.

"No, the second girl I've met here without an introduction."

"You must have come this noon," she bantered. "Still, I'm glad to hear there was some one else. Who was she?"

"A little girl who flirted with me in the subway. I took her to dinner and the theater, and she talked in big figures about things and people her speech and manner didn't fit."

"You're severe on a nice girl, who was good enough to spend an evening with you."

"Is a girl who poses, nice?"

"Well—I——" she began.

"We're getting too serious," he said, and turned to the waiter.

When they had ordered she said, "That isn't too serious for me. I'm interested. Did you stop flirting because the first girl posed?"

"You know best. Did I flirt with you?"

"I think not."

"But I might have gone on and not inflicted myself."

"Then you wouldn't learn whether I pose—so as to tell the third girl."

"If you pose there will be no third one."

"You do take it seriously," she cried,

"Indeed. If friendships and marriages were based more upon things intrinsic instead of upon the things literal and figurative in which people are clothed, they would be happier."



Her hand was on the rail, and she was about to step down when he spoke. "May I offer my umbrella?"

"You're a reformer," she charged.

"No, but when a young man looks around for a potential wife, he wonders why the girls don't attempt direct unions with Rolls-Royce, Tiffany, or Churchill."

"And when the girls fathom the real reason back of the sweet nothings which the men utter—" she began earnestly.

"Go on, we men are strong enough to bear it."

"We mustn't," she said. "There's too much that's disgusting about the way people choose their friends and mates by false standards. If they only were like—like us! Here's a chance to avoid the condition we both condemn. You don't know me and I don't know you."

"But I want to get acquainted!"

"And you might find me the sort that would demand orchids with my breakfast, and a Park Avenue apartment with five servants."

"And you might find me a poor broker's clerk with only the ten thousand dollars a year I make from tips."

"We might—so we won't!"

"Mum's the word. We know each other, only we don't!"

"But we must have names. Mine's Martha Jenkins."

"Martha! Sounds like a girl who would wear pantalets and knit; a home girl who could get up meals that would put a bay window on a skeleton. And Jenkins! There's a little place in the Jersey hills, a quaint little old place modernized, with a white walk and gentlemen's ruffles growing up in the back yard. Jenkins fits it. You go out on the trolley. Maybe you don't use the trolley. Yvonne wouldn't."

"Yvonne?"

"The first girl, you know. She always specified taxis."

"I should be glad to ride on the trolley," she said. "Since the fare went up it's quite plutocratic."

"We'll go out some time," he said.

"For, of course, we'll meet again."

"Certainly. You'll be much interested until you learn I'm——"

"The daughter of a millionaire, and out of a clerk's reach. And you find I'm——"

"An intellectual, demanding associates capable of the higher thought."

"Then," he said, "we must keep from learning anything about our respective standings."

"Surely," she said. "We daren't know each other's address or place of employment—if such be—or anything."

"Right! We'll report meetings like this: The Dual Alliance for the Discouragement of More Intimate Acquaintance met at Harvey's Restaurant. Miss Jenkins read the minutes of the last meeting. Mr.—wait, I haven't a name—Mr. Ward—Jack Ward, that has a fine ring don't you think—Mr. Ward read a paper entitled: 'My Uncle Has a Wooden Leg, But I Refuse To Give the Details.' Place of next meeting, third bench from end, left side of mall, Central Park."

So they made merry for almost an hour.

"In fact," she said, when they mentioned their mutual enjoyment over coffee, "I don't think we could have gotten on nearly so well if we had known each other for years."

"You cynic," he said. "There are people who know each other wonderfully well, and still get along."

"You really think so?"

"Certainly," he smiled. "It depends upon who the other person is."

"It would be lucky to be that way," she said, looking out over Broadway, where the rain had given way to clearing skies of evening.

"It sure must," he said. Then he asked, "And when does the Dual Alliance meet again?"

"When would you suggest?"

"This is Thursday," he said, "and I

must be away over the week-end. How would Monday or Tuesday do?"

"Tuesday."

"Then we might meet, and at Jules, the little French restaurant in Forty-fifth street."

"Good. Meantime we must promise not to shadow, or anything of that sort."

"Surely. I won't steal a dish you've left a finger print on to determine your name and address, or send a sleuth after you. At this door you fade into the six and a half million, and we meet no more until Tuesday. But there's nothing to keep me from thinking about you!"

"Nor I," she smiled, as they said good-by.

Outside, all traces of the rain had disappeared, save for the dampness of the pavements, and as she walked south she saw above the entrance to Central Park a lovely arc to give the traditional delight to seafaring men. To her, as well, the rainbow seemed a fitting end for an hour which had brought a rift of light into a troubled period.

She did not walk farther south than Columbus Circle, but there took the subway to Fiftieth Street, where she once more emerged upon Broadway. A step away, she passed within sight of the gorgeous front of a famous theater, and then to its shabby rear, worn by the passing in and out of countless tons of scenery, by the feet of generations of ladies of the chorus, and by years of the goings and comings of the seen and unseen multitudes whose work enters into great musical revues.

Winding through a dark land, redolent of that strange mixture of odors one finds behind the scenes, she at last entered a door. At a table a dark, well-rounded girl was in the early stages of making up.

"You're early," she said, as she looked up.

"Am I?" said the other, out of breath.

"I thought I was late. I guess——" She paused and looked about queerly.

"You've been at them new-fangled dry drinks," said the other girl. "Sody water cocktails or crème de sarsaparilla."

"No, I was just thinking."

"Quit your kidding. Do you figure anybody who does any real thinking stays in this business?"

"Don't, Kitty, please—I feel so good!"

Kitty Lane—Kathryn Lancaster on the stage—laughed knowingly. "So you met Mr. Burkley on his way out."

"No," said the other, her face clouding. "Was he here?"

"He was. Sneaking up to the door like he always is, trying to get a peep."

"After what Mr. Glenn told William?"

"Come to, dearie, come to! That bawling out for the doorman was just for home consumption. You don't think Mr. Glenn meant it, do you?"

"Then you think there are hidden influences which let men like Burkley come back here to bother us?"

"If you call it bothering—yes! Most of them have another name for it. It's hidden influence, the same as lets some live on the Drive while you and I do a sardine into a hallroom. Dough won't get you far in heaven, but it sure do grease the wheels down here."

"And we—anyway I—must stay on and be made love to simply because of my body. It isn't so much Burkley as his class—as the idea! I'm sick of it, sick of it!"

Kitty looked at her aghast.

"You're sick of being the hit of the show, of getting more newspaper space than old Mrs. de Milo would get herself if she'd walk down Broadway?"

"No, being a hit isn't so bad as——"

"Well, you don't think the music hall is paying in three figures girls all stuck out with extra petticoats to come out and recite, do you?"

"No," said the other with deep conviction. "I know why we're here. When I spoke two lines in the ball-room scene of last year's dramatic success nobody knew I was on the stage. I was dressed as a woman should be. Then I starved six months trying to get a part—something of the sort I spent years getting ready for before I came to New York—and I didn't get it. I had to eat, and have a roof over my head, so I came here. Once that connoisseur of women's flesh saw me in tights, I was raised to my present high position in the drama!"

"Stick around, kid," comforted Kitty. "Somebody'll buy you a Greek theater, and give you one of them sissies that tiptoes around like the stage was hot, to play opposite you."

"I'll stick, to get money to try for another real part. Sometimes I loathe myself for not being able to hold out to the end like the hundreds of other real artists here—actors, singers, musicians, scorning a chance to cheapen themselves merely for money while the stage so richly pays former—"

"Hold on!" Kitty fired. "I used to be a milliner, and, if I do say it, I've turned out some darn good hats."

"That's all right, Kitty," said the other. "It gets us nowhere to protest the public taste. I'll just say I know what we're here for."



"You'll pardon me, Mr. Glenn," he said. "But I felt you must be call for Miss

"But, dearie, listen! With all that's been written and said about you for a starter, you can go a lot higher, and never have to bother with any of that Shakespeare or Ibsen stuff, either. You know, when a musical-comedy star gets just so good, she can put on a long skirt, and give them just her personality."

"Maybe so, Kitty. But that's neither here nor there. I know that after one month of playing I've just got my debts cleared up, and I've got to stay a while longer if I don't want to be as badly off as ever."



talking to Miss Eden about the ball. Now I am going to the ball, and let me suggest that I Eden with my car."

"And who can tell but what some dead swell will read that piece called 'Venus Put to Shame,' that first one which came out in the *Review*, or some of those other things that's run since, and marry you."

"No, Kitty, the sort of man I want mustn't fall in love with me here. I want a man who wants me for myself and not because I look well in tights."

"Oh, you want a sort of be-a-brother-to-you kind, like I've read about."

"No, but——"

"On the square, do you expect to find one?"

"Well, I might. I was with one to-night who seemed——"

"Hoho, my lady!" cried Kitty. "So that's why you're flying so high!"

"It is a trifle exhilarating after the sort which has been seeking me for the past month."

"Well, is he deaf, dumb, and blind that he won't see in the newspapers these pictures and articles about you?"

"That's not such a risk. And we're pledged not to hunt information about each other."

Kitty combined a gasp and a dodge. "Can you imagine it?" she asked,

shaking her head. "Tossing away your best chance to hook him!"

"You don't understand, Kitty. We're taking each other for just what we are. Rank and position count for nothing."

"He don't know your figger is your own, and you don't know his aunt is addicted to snuff. Well, watch out! My sister married a fellow that said he was high in the world, and he turned out to be a steeple jack!"

"Kitty!" her companion was reproving, when there was a knock on the door.

It was Mr. Glenn, the manager.

"Miss Eden," he said, as he entered, addressing himself to the girl who had given her new acquaintance the name of Martha Jenkins, "I want to speak to you about a little press stunt we're working. My friend, Mr. Farley, manager of Hotel Grandvue, wants a little coöperation from us. They're having their last Artists' Ball, a fancy-dress affair, next Friday night. He wants you to attend and sing a song for them. There will be a machine for you, and dinner for any one you may care to take along. For this we allow him to advertise that Ina Eden, 'The Girl on the Minaret,' will be one of the guests—in costume."

"In costume," she said significantly. Then she banished her first impulse, and said, "Yes, Mr. Glenn, I will go."

"Thanks, Miss Eden. Then it's——"

He was interrupted by a knock which was instantly followed by the opening of the door. A florid face, clean shaven save for a waxed mustache, peeped in with a peculiarly unconvincing playfulness. It was followed by a man in evening clothes, a man past middle age, with the stamp of the world upon him.

"You'll pardon me, Mr. Glenn," he said. "But I felt you must be talking to Miss Eden about the ball. I met Farley this afternoon at the hotel and he told me. Now I am going to the ball, and let me suggest that I call for Miss Eden with my car."

"Certainly, Mr. Burkley, so far as I——" began Glenn.

"If you don't mind, Mr. Glenn," said Ina Eden, ignoring the man called Burkley, "I think I shall go in the car you furnish."

"But, Miss Eden——"

"Mr. Glenn, I consented to go chiefly out of regard for the fair way in which you have treated me here, rather than for sympathy with the scheme; and I'll go in the car you provide."

Glenn was visibly between forces. He seemed about to make another appeal when Burkley raised his hand. His eyes glistened and his suave smile was unpleasantly colored by craftiness.

"Never mind, Mr. Glenn," he said. "Miss Eden mistakes me. I should prefer that time teach her the truth. So I withdraw my invitation."

Glenn seemed relieved, if not entirely satisfied, and so, followed by Burkley, who smiled and bowed himself out, he withdrew.

"Well, you take my cork under," said Kitty, when they were alone. "How do you get that way?"

"There are better things, Kitty."

"The old 'Rags-are-royal-raitment' stuff! Well, page me a couple of aged doughboys with one foot in the grave, and a sack of loot pushing them down!"

"You're terrible, Kitty! It's not a man's money, but his heart."

"Speaking of hearts, have one! Half hour's past, and I'm way behind."

Ina, not appearing in the opening scene, prepared herself more leisurely. Dimly there came to her, as she made up and dressed, the hurrying of feet outside, the distant thrumming of the great orchestra, and at last the blending of voices and music on the opening number.

Twenty minutes later, draped in snowy white, her loveliness made brilliant beneath the spotlight, Ina Eden was ready for her entrance. She was an American girl sold in the slave mart

to an Eastern potentate who sang to her the sort of bombastic song usually assigned to Eastern potentates in musical productions.

A few turns of the wonderful kaleidoscope with its comedians, scantily dressed choristers, and gorgeous scenery, and Ina's big scene swung around. High on a slender minaret, back of which stretched away an endless vista of Oriental roofs, she stood. The harem favorite has escaped, and here, while murderous Moslems seek her below, she pours out an appealing song.

Lights flood upon her from above. The spotlight's white eye bares every inch of her exquisite form, clearly outlined through the sheerest film of a veil which encircles her. Her song is touching, but its appeal is lost in the beauty of the woman. Marvelously chiseled, each limb delicately tapered, her white throat molded upward from a milky bosom to a faultless head, from which her golden locks fell in an artistic mass, Ina Eden was inspiration for any artist, whether he pictured her in oils, marble, or words.

A hush was over the house as it looked upon "The Girl on the Minaret." Something entered the audience subconsciously. Although the spectators did not realize it, the girl was speaking to them from her real self. She was there, a pure creature seeking escape from the hunting sensualists about her. And it was this very innocence and purity, always recognized if not always followed by the Way Called White, that made them look upon her almost in awe.

It was this which brought the wave of applause that always greeted the end of her song, and which had taken her name into print and gossip. Her rescue by the gallant young American, aided by aeroplanes and battleships, seemed an anticlimax to the scene.

As she entered the dressing room Kitty turned to her eagerly.

"I've got a piece of hot stuff," she said. "I knew that old guy Burkley didn't have them bowing and scraping for nothing. Listen! I just got it on good authority. Flora De Vellier has the dope. The firm's trying to renew its lease on the Apollo—you know, in Forty-second Street—and old Burkley's got the deal in the palm of his hand."

Ina nodded.

"So that makes Burkley's hand strong around here, and, I tell you just as a friend, I'd humor him. If he didn't want you, or I, or any of us around here, we wouldn't be here, see?"

"I shouldn't care so much," said Ina.

"No, as long as you had Mr. Mystery Man, the great unknown. Say, do you think *he* would like you if you were built like a bed slat?"

"I'll lock you out, if you don't stop,"

Ina called after the other girl, who was tearing away to make the next number. But Kitty's words had their effect. Ina went to Jules' on the following Tuesday, half thinking that Jack Ward would leer at her like a satyr.

She almost laughed at the sight of his friendly smile. As they talked, his athletic figure seemed to stand out more and more, and there came to her something which was startling; nothing less than pictures of him springing from a diving board and swimming away with long, steady strokes, and clad in a white track suit, vying with other athletes—these pictures, and the desire really to see them in life.

It was a curious feeling; one that she was rather ashamed of, yet one that she liked. She was glad when he asked that he might see her again soon.

"I wish we could spend an evening together," he said.

There, she knew he would urge that! But it couldn't be, and yet she couldn't explain. But, as a woman will, she fenced on:

"We might. When——"

"Next Friday? There's——"



A hush was over the house as it looked upon "The Girl on the Minaret."

"I'm sorry," she said. "But I couldn't go that night."

"But you'll save an evening the following week, won't you?"

"I'll let you know," she said.

"Good! Now, how about a ride?" He led her across the street to a natty little sport car.

"There, don't look at the license number! No fair, snooping! If my boss

don't catch us we'll have a nice little jaunt."

They did in fact, have a glorious one. After some fifty miles or more of airy motoring, including tea at a country place, he set her down near Broadway and Forty-second Street. Neither had learned that about the other which would in any way interest a rating concern or the publishers of a directory.

But there had grown up a friendship of sympathy and understanding which had drawn both much closer. Their pleasure at being together during the afternoon was such that on parting, Jack Ward said he could not wait until next week to see her, and asked if she would not lunch with him at the same place on Friday. She consented, and did not make a show of reluctance.

In fact, between the hour of their parting and Friday noon, she felt a deep anticipation. For Friday night was to be an evening to which she was not looking forward in any measure, and the luncheon was an event which would make the day far more bearable.

They met that noon as old friends, and this in turn complicated matters; for their intimacy, without their sensing it, was beginning to rebel at this

curious handicap of withholding personal knowledge. Behind their readiness of tongue and merry laughter was an ever-growing fire, burning thinner and thinner the barrier which they had set between them.

Although both felt this situation, no intimation of it took the form of words until the close of their luncheon.

"I'm sorry you're engaged this evening," he said. "It would be so fine for a ride."

"I'm sorry, too," she said, and felt it.

"I think you might tell where you're going," he smiled.

"And you might tell what your real name is. But this I'll say: where I'm going gives me no pleasure."

"You'd rather be with me, perhaps."

"I should."

"You mean it?"

"I do."

He impulsively reached, and for the first time took her hand.

"When next we meet," he said, "you will know me, and I you."

"You would break up the Dual Alliance?"

"It has been delightful, but it has served its purpose."

"But what if the other member says no?"

"She will not. Will she?"

"She will exercise her rights."

"Please meet me to-morrow."

"The Alliance must be saved—until next week at least."

With this he had to allow himself to be put off. She went toward Sixth Avenue, he toward Broadway. When she was almost out of sight he turned and smiled.

"Next week?" he laughed. "Must I wait until next week?"

The limousine provided by Mr. Glenn came for Ina at eleven-thirty. With a ball dress over the scant costume in which she appeared on the minaret, she entered it alone. There was something

more than indignation now. She was far away from everybody, it seemed. She was a little clammy, and just a little scared. The car was so big and cold. And she was going on an errand which was not agreeable. How much better she would have felt if Jack Ward could have been there beside her!

But what she had thought might be an ordeal was nothing, after all. Mr. Glenn met her at the door and escorted her without blare of trumpets to a dressing room from which, a little later, she went to a private room opening upon the gallery above the dance floor. Here a little dinner was set for the visiting actors who numbered less than a dozen. After it, most of the others drifted down to have a few dances before one o'clock, the hour set for the special numbers which were to embellish the ball.

She danced once or twice with actors she knew, without calling attention to herself, for she was clad like the others, and there were countless beautiful women on the dance floor. Then, to prepare for her number, she started up to the ladies' dressing room. On the way, she paused in the door of the room where they had eaten their supper, and which was now deserted.

Leaning over the balcony, she gazed at the whirling maze of fancy costumes below. Crowding far back beneath the balcony on which she stood, the dancers moved in eccentric courses like varicolored bubbles, dancing and effervescing in a giant caldron. It was a picture which fascinated her and kept her in a conspicuous place; and not without result.

As she turned to pass through the deserted private room on her way to the dressing room, she nearly walked into a gay old Roman in toga and sandals, only distinguished from a typical pleasure worshiper of the period of decline by his waxed mustache and modern gaze.

"Ah, Miss Eden, an unexpected pleasure! I was walking on the outer balcony getting a little air."

She was about to turn and walk back to the balcony when Burkley stepped in front of her.

"While we're alone," he said, "can't I just have a moment? I'm sure you don't understand me, Miss Eden."

"Mr. Burkley," she said, "I thought it was all settled."

"That I shouldn't bring you. But how about taking you home? Miss Eden, I like you, and I'm in a position to help you a lot. Perhaps you may not want to be seen with me. Well, that can be fixed. At my place we can have entire freedom, and nobody—Ah, I know women, and you, my dear, are——"

"One that will have nothing to do with you! I *loathe* you!" she burst out. "You and all the men that have hounded me since I took that miserable part! I know all about you and——"

"You're the sort. The others, a lot of stupid children! Catching them is nothing! But to kiss you—even to kiss you——"

Some savage impulse had robbed him of his power to speak coherently, and he pressed at her, ranting wildly. Cut off from the exit to the gallery, she fled backward. Again he apprehended her, and she fell back against the wall, white and gasping, as he came on.

The cry forming on her lips never was uttered. A strong arm reached in from the rear and held the pursuing Roman off. A masked silver harlequin, tall and commanding, pushed Burkley away from her.

"Is this man here at your invitation?" the harlequin asked sternly.

"No!"

"Take your hands off me!" cried Burkley, struggling. "You——"

Only an ugly word or two escaped Burkley's lips when the fist of the harlequin met his chin at a most effective

point. He dropped over with hardly a sound.

The other man stooped.

"I didn't mean it so hard," he said.

As he rose again, the silver harlequin whipped off his mask, and she was looking into the red but smiling face of Jack Ward.

"You!" she cried, trying to run away.

But his arm was about her.

"There may be trouble over this," he said, "and I don't want you to face it. Over here there's an easy way out."

He quickly shot his mask over his eyes again. She let herself be led. The thought of appearing that night was something vague and distant. They hurried down the hall. A waiter was climbing the stairs. Ward had a bill ready for him.

"In that room," he said, pointing, "a man is sick. Get him something to drink quick. I'm going for a taxi."

Then, as the waiter disappeared, they swerved to a fire-escape door. Now they were out on a platform. The cool night air touched their cheeks. The great city lay stretched before them.

They started down, his arm about her. Her step missed, and she fell against him. He peered down. "This openwork stuff doesn't fit French heels," he smiled, and then she was in his arms. Around and down, around and down, the great dark place below coming nearer, and the lighted windows and the sound of music fading out above.

At last her feet touched earth. They were in a courtyard.

"Lucky I know the lay of this place," he breathed. "Now to keep our promise to that waiter. We're after a taxi!"

Out through a gateway they passed, and into an empty cross street. Fifth Avenue was only a short distance off. She made no protest as he hailed a taxi.

"Now," he said, "I'm ready to take you home!"

Her duty to Glenn did not call

strongly. After what had happened to Burkley there was probably little chance for her continuance, at any rate. So she got in, gave him an address in the Nineties, which he repeated, and then took his place beside her.

The arm which had formed the habit of protecting her came back to its place. As he drew her over to him he said:

"The Dual Alliance is tottering. But before it falls I want to ask a question. Will you marry me?"

"But—you don't know me."

"As well as you do me. Please——"

"But——"

"Then you don't believe in the Alliance. You said you liked me for myself. Can't you love me the same?"

She was silent. The cab rattled on. Then slowly his grip on her hands slackened.

"You don't care for me?" he said in a voice which seemed almost to break.

"Yes, yes!"

Quickly her hands had followed his and she was snuggling against his shoulder.

"You will," he breathed.

"Yes!"

They swung on for blocks, she pressed close to his breast. Then he saw a clock and chuckled.

"It's the hour for unmasking. The history of the Dual Alliance gives place to a volume called 'Who's Who In the Taxicab.'"

"A volume?" she laughed.

"Maybe not. I'm not so important."

He flashed on a light and beneath it showed her an engraved card.

"Morton Blaine!" she gasped.

"Blaine—the man who wrote 'Over the Chasm' and 'The Mighty Adventure'?"

"Yes," he admitted. "One playwright, at least, who's had a share of luck and tied part of it up in that little place over in Jersey."

"One playwright who writes exactly the sort of plays I'd given anything to appear in!"

"Whatever your heart demands. But now my secret's out. Tell yours!"

She was hiding her face over her last unguarded remark, and as he stroked her face, a tear, whether of joy or shame, wet his fingers.

"You needn't, Ina, dear," he said. "I knew it all the time."

"Then you deceived me!"

"No, just a case of playwright's license. I posed—not Yvonne— There was no Yvonne. I wanted you to know me just as a man!"

"Not as a man who had fallen in love with me across the footlights. I'm so glad I didn't get that sort!"

"I'm not so sure, dear. The best loves are founded on physical attraction—if they don't stop there. You wouldn't like a man who didn't feel that way for you. And you will feel that way for me."

"I do," she confessed, her face hidden.

"Then, if we're convinced we both feel that way, and other ways besides, I'll tell you something. When your show opened, I saw it. I was so enthusiastic about you that my friend, the editor of the *Review*, asked me to write a little piece. That was the one they headed: 'Venus Put to Shame.'"



How to Improve *the* Complexion

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

Dr. Whitney is always glad to answer all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health, but she cannot undertake to answer letters which fail to inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for reply, or to letters inclosing Canadian stamps. Every week she receives many letters of this sort, in spite of the notice always printed at the end of this department. Sometimes, even, the post office sends notification that letters are being held for her, which careless writers have posted with no stamp. If you have failed to receive a reply to your letter, you may know that it is for one of these three reasons.—EDITORS.

WHERE are the beauties of yesteryear? Is the assertion recently made by a British critic to the effect that "nowadays we rarely hear of great beauties," correct? Is the reply of another Britisher that feminine beauty is more diffused, nearer the truth? In former days, women of quality doubtless did have a monopoly on beauty, while those in the lower ranks of life had to be possessed of exceptional loveliness to attract attention. To-day all this is changed. The general improvement in living conditions accounts for the great improvement in the looks of women, yet it is an indisputable fact that an entrancing complexion, one of "peaches and cream," is rarely seen nowadays. It is generally conceded, and always by beauty critics, that a fair skin is the most attractive feature a woman can possess, for, so blessed, she can use this as a setting upon which to bring out other attractions and thereby greatly enhance her appearance.

But we see few women to whom the gods have given a naturally clear, unblemished skin, transparent and delicately pink as a rose petal. The majority of women have missed this great gift, or, having possessed a tendency in the right direction in childhood, have deliberately ruined their chances by maltreatment — unintentionally, of course, for who would consciously de-

stroy so lovely a work of nature? Early lack of appreciation of individual needs with regard to the skin must account for the muddy complexions, the discoloration and eruption and the premature wrinkles observable in so many women.

In Great Britain, famed for the complexions of her womenfolk, the air is moist, the barometrical changes are not so sudden, and, furthermore, the houses are not overheated and women are therefore more inured to cold. Then, too, they are more accustomed to the outdoors than we, all of which has combined to give them an *active* skin. Herein lies one of the secrets of a good complexion. When the functions of an organ are properly and continuously performed, that organ maintains the condition nature intended it to be in normally. Persons living in the country usually possess *good* color, while townfolk are known as "palefaces."

To begin at the beginning. The majority of city women will be horrified to learn that their faces are seldom thoroughly clean. We do not seem to take the dust-laden atmosphere of a great city into consideration. Soap and water really do not affect a thorough cleansing. One has but to inspect a wash cloth that has been employed one week for the purpose of cleaning the face, and note its gray, discolored appearance, to realize that the skin is

probably in the same condition, because the bacteria-laden particles of dirt continuously swept over one's face inevitably lodge in the myriads of pores and are not removed with soap, water, and wash cloth. The clogged pores enlarge, as the oil which should be excreted collects, and in time we see the sad spectacle of many blackheads and—other things being conducive—pimples, developing often into acne. Sometimes the trouble is concentrated in one spot, where one painful boil-like pimple after another furnishes an outlet for the accumulated débris. When this condition does not prevail, the complexion becomes dull, lifeless, either a dirty gray or a mud hue; the hair, the eyes, seem out of harmony, and no color is becoming. And, by the way, the surest test of a good complexion is the effect which your "own" color schemes have on your appearance. Do they heighten and intensify your coloring? Or do they strike a discordant note?

Most women actually go to bed with an accumulation of the day's grime upon their faces, plus the vast amount of effete matter which the glands secrete. They will be amazed to see the condition of a spotlessly clean strip of linen after it has done duty *once* as a face cloth in applying the *cream face bath*, for this is the method employed and advised by all famous beauty specialists. Soap and water may be used at times and on some skins, but oils are the only effective agents for penetrating deeply into the tissues and removing all the grimy matter which collects there in the course of each twenty-four hours. The face and neck—never forget to include the latter—should be anointed with a good cleansing cream. The cream should be not merely smeared on, but actually massaged into the skin with the usual rotary massage movements—around and around, up and out—using the surfaces of the first three fingers of each hand. When well

worked in, remove with an absolutely clean cloth, and your astonished eyes will rejoice that they alone see the results. If the day has been a very strenuous one, a second application of cleansing cream will be necessary.

Given a fairly good complexion, this treatment, as a routine measure, will suffice, although even in normal cases an occasional bath of softened water must be employed to rid the skin of oils. Water is a great solvent, but it is not sufficient to remove grime. When, after several nights of cream baths, the face assumes an oily or greasy appearance, follow the cleansing process with a scrubbing of hot water and bland soap, using a complexion brush. After it, apply cold water and then a spray of astringent toilet water to close the pores.

Rough handling or the use of coarse towels is very apt to discolor and even to bruise the skin of the face, which is exceptionally delicate. A very simple astringent wash consists of: Tincture of benzoin, four drams, and sufficient rose water to make sixteen ounces.

If the skin is "loose," a tonic lotion is more helpful. One much liked by the French contains: Rose water, fifty grams; spirits of camphor, five grams; tincture of benzoin, two and half grams. Allow the lotion to dry into the skin.

There are some skins which will not tolerate soap of even the finest quality, and in such cases cleansing meals should be used. And, indeed, when one has used these, soap will be found very undesirable, as it has a tendency, in all cases, to dry and tighten the skin.

Almond meal, put up in small bottles or cartons and sold at a low price, can be found in most department stores. However, this usually consists of the residue or husks of the nuts, after the oil has been extracted, with a little powdered soap added. Almonds and other nuts and meals recommended for this purpose contain a saponaceous

quality, so that the addition of soap is unnecessary, while the powdered meal imparts to the water a soft blandness which is very cleansing and refreshing. It is much more satisfactory to prepare these meals at home, and among the simplest and cheapest is this combination: Finely powdered oatmeal, sixteen ounces; powdered orris root, two ounces; oil of neroli, ten drops; oil of bergamot, twenty drops. Ten per cent. solution of ionone may be substituted for the oils. The proportion of oatmeal and orris may also be altered at will.

If almonds can be obtained, use the following: Powdered oatmeal, eight ounces, and unblanched powdered sweet almonds, eight ounces. Perfume to suit.

These meals, moistened with warm water, should be applied to the skin like soap, using a clean cloth or a camel's-hair brush or, better still, the finger tips. In many instances of neglected complexions, which have become not only discolored, but in which the skin is coarse and "pebbly," stronger measures than these are required. Here the sanded almond meal is, effective, and may be used as follows: Borax, one ounce; glycerin, two ounces; sand, eight ounces; sweet almonds—powdered or ground almond-meal cake—twenty ounces; oil of bitter almond or benzaldehyde, one dram. Dissolve the borax in the glycerin by the aid of heat, mix this well with the sand, and then add the other ingredients. The sand must be white sand, the finest possible powder. This sanded almond meal is also to be used like soap, slightly moistened and rubbed into the skin; not vigorously, so as to cause abrasions. If the finger tips are used, one may more easily gauge the force employed. This treatment should be carried out at night several times weekly, and the face and throat should be bathed afterward in clear water, dried, and then gently anointed with pure almond oil.

So marked is the rejuvenation of faded, discolored, neglected complexions under this treatment, that they are not recognizable after a few weeks.

A very simple method of refining the skin is to apply a paste of almond meal directly to it after the cleansing process, allowing it to remain on some time after it has become thoroughly dried. This treatment is most effectively carried out at night, the mask being then washed off the following morning with tepid water, followed by a spray of tonic wash. This treatment also has a bleaching effect and will suffice for mildly discolored skins. A complexion which has been subjected for years to auto-intoxication through sluggishness of the intestinal tract, or which has been deeply tanned by exposure to the sun during the summer months, must receive stronger treatment.

A famous grand-opera star retains the beauty of her skin by using two old-fashioned, time-honored remedies—buttermilk and horse-radish.

Half an ounce of shredded horse-radish should be gently simmered in one pint of buttermilk for six hours, then strained and bottled. Apply to the skin with sterilized cotton, and allow to remain on as long as desirable. Then wash off with warm milk. This is also an effective treatment for ordinary freckles.

While some complexions are muddy or discolored, others are red, greasy, shiny, to the great discomfort of their possessors. Here, too, soap must be taboo and meals employed. In these cases a liquid cleanser such as the following is effective: Camphor water, one pint; pure glycerin, one half ounce; borax, one-quarter ounce.

As a rule, plethoric—full-blooded—people suffer from red countenances. Here the diet must be regulated. Green vegetables and fruits in their uncooked state should form the bulk of it, eliminating pastries, red meats, soups, spices,

sweets. Also, six glassfuls of water should be consumed daily to flush the system, for a red, dusky skin spells congestion. The clothing must be worn loose, so that there is no constriction anywhere.

The lotion just mentioned is also an excellent treatment for enlarged pores. It should be used in combination with strenuous cleansings of meals and the camel's-hair complexion brush. Enlarged pores develop where the skin is naturally coarse-grained or oily. The everyday washings with soap and wash cloths accentuate the natural texture of such a skin, with the result that the pores simply gape in time. Unless the utmost vigilance is daily employed in its care, such a skin will inevitably produce *blackheads*. When they have once made their appearance, it is necessary that treatment be instituted and persistently, unremittingly pursued until the hateful blemish is entirely overcome, because open pores and blackheads are the inevitable forerunners of pimples, and when pimples are once established, the hope of retaining or of cultivating a lovely complexion is difficult of achievement.

Blackheads can be treated in several ways. Some specialists advise applications of hot cloths until the skin is reddened, followed by a very generous coating of cold cream; this to be repeated several times daily for a week, or until the content of the pores is thoroughly softened, when the tiny mass may be gently pressed out with an extractor. After this, the following lotion may be applied, to further contract the pores: Subcarbonate of soda, thirty-six grains; distilled water, eight ounces; essence of roses, six drams. Some specialists do not approve of the above treatment, because, with injudicious handling, the skin cannot fail to become bruised. They employ instead the absorption process, for which the following ointment is used: Soap lini-

ment, one ounce, and ether, one ounce. After cleansing the face, each blackhead is covered generously with the ointment, which is then allowed to remain on all night, and removed in the morning. The treatment should be repeated nightly until the blemishes are absorbed and the pores contracted.

When blackheads are forcibly removed and the surrounding skin bruised, pus germs are likely to enter and cause pimples. As a rule, chronic pimples are due to some underlying constitutional derangement. Impoverishment of the blood, but especially *toxic* blood, which is the result of a sluggish intestinal tract, will give rise to pimply eruptions in those so inclined, for it must be admitted that many persons possess a "tendency" to eruptive disorders. Such persons should devote themselves to a course of reconstruction. The intestinal tract being an infolding of the outer skin, it stands to reason that when this is maintained in a thoroughly healthy state, the most sensitive skin will retain its texture and remain unblemished. It has been many times stated in these pages that the complexion is an index to the condition of one's health. Many persons are afflicted with auto-intoxication, only too apparent to others, but sometimes little heeded by the victim, unless it gives rise to actual suffering.

Of first importance in this condition is the removal of all noxious matter throughout the entire alimentary canal. Many remedies have been offered for this purpose, usually in the form of laxative salines. In using these, it should be borne in mind that continual use depletes the system. For quite some years the medical profession has recognized the value of yeast as an intestinal antiseptic and laxative. Its antiseptic power is due to the fact that it is itself a representative of the lower organisms and so can counteract bacterial decomposition. Acting on this

knowledge, skin specialists experimented with the external application of yeast paste—combined with its internal administration—and, to their gratification, were rewarded with amazing results, so that the yeast treatment is now a well-established, reputable method in medical circles.

How is the yeast treatment employed to overcome pimples and other eruptive disorders and to establish a fine complexion?

When brewer's yeast is available, from two to four teaspoonfuls should be taken three times daily, shortly before each meal. The compressed yeast cake is quite as efficacious. One half a cake, dissolved in half a teacup of hot water, is the dose. It can be eaten with

fruit, also. Some authorities prescribe a full cake three times a day in severe conditions. For external treatment a thick paste is made; this is rubbed into the skin with the finger tips—always after a thorough preliminary cleansing, of course—and a generous portion allowed to remain on, mask fashion. Since yeast is a fungus growth and destroys low organisms, the beneficial effect of its *direct* application to germ-like eruptions such as pimples, furuncles, and the like can easily be understood. Therefore, cleansing, disinfecting, and sweetening the intestinal tract with yeast, and applying yeast paste externally, should result in that which is so generally coveted and admired—a beautiful complexion.

WHAT READERS ASK

BLANCHE X.—Every complexion requires individual treatment, for what benefits one harms another. So, if you will write me a personal letter, inclosing stamped, addressed envelope, I shall be glad to enter into your special needs.

G. P.—Under no circumstances should you use a solution of camphor and alcohol to reduce your bust, unless you are willing to destroy the glands permanently. Harmless methods of reduction include gentle pressure by means of firm bandages, brassieres, et cetera; also the induction of perspiration with rubber jackets. Vigorous exercises, such as bag punching and the like, should be pursued daily. The difficulty with most women is that they have not the patience and determination to pursue a line of treatment with unflinching regularity for days, weeks, and months.

MRS. MORTON.—It is only because there is not sufficient space for the formula and directions you want that I am not giving them here. The complexion is so frequently referred to in this department that I am surprised that you have failed to find what you want. However, if you will send a stamped, self-addressed envelope, specifying your needs, I shall gladly send you special advice.

MR. T. D. R.—You will find this mixture admirable for allaying an itchy skin: Carbolic acid, 20 drops; rosemary water, $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce; glycerin, 1 ounce.

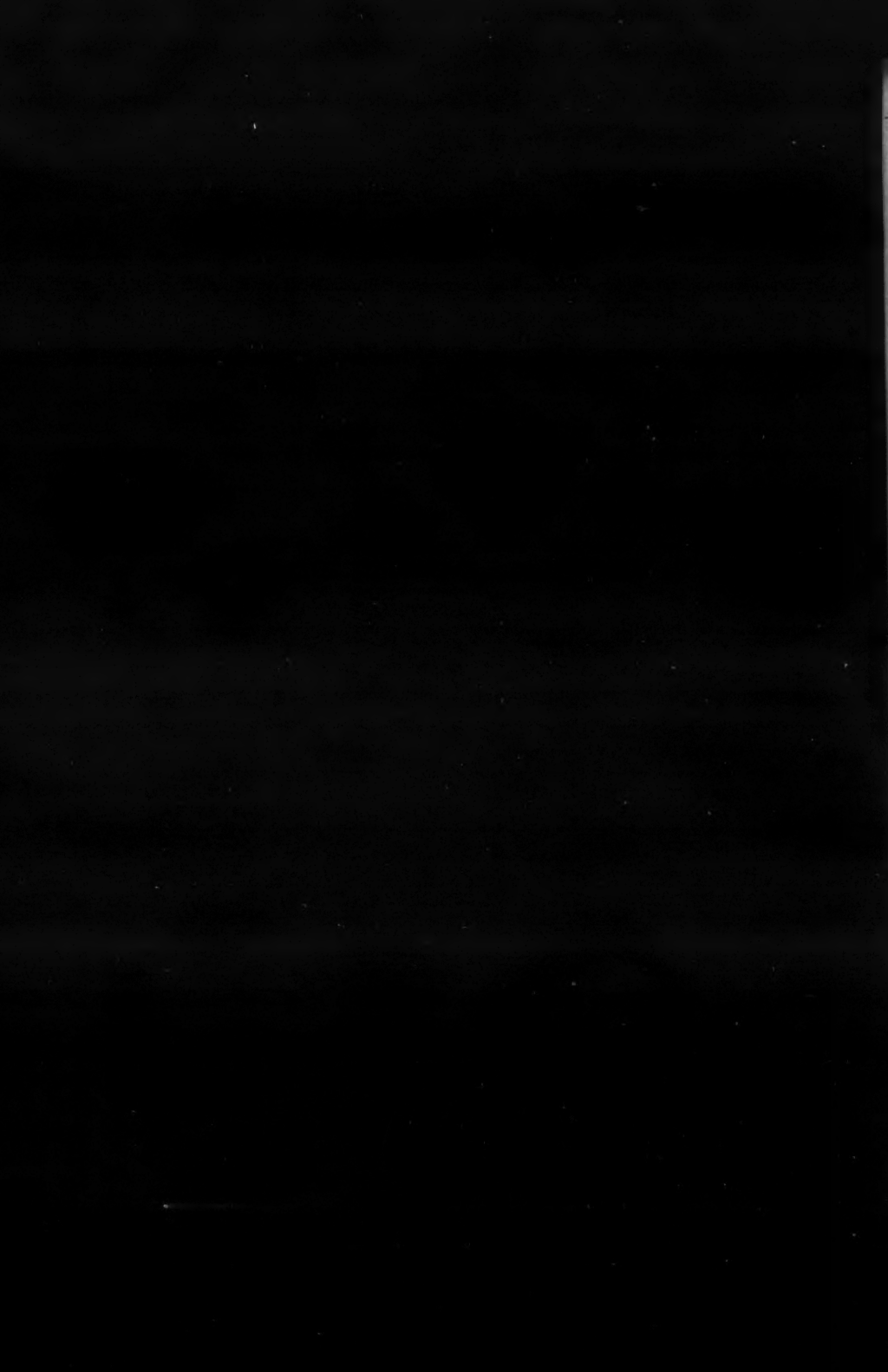
OLD WOMAN.—I will gladly give you directions for overcoming wrinkles and sagging tissues. Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

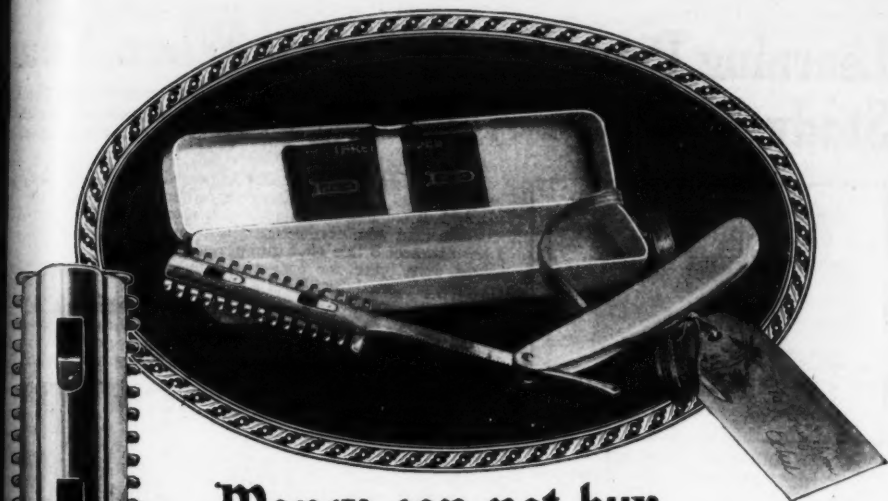
MILDRED.—Perspiring hands are usually indicative of nervousness. Look well to your general condition. This lotion will help: Extract of belladonna, 15 grains; cologne water, 70 grains. Label the mixture *Poison*. Rub a few drops upon the palms of the hands and allow to dry in.

FLO R.—Your best course would be to consult a chiroprapist. I shall gladly mail directions for the treatment of corns and bunions. It is too bad you missed the recent article on "Foot Troubles." However, back numbers of the magazine are always available to readers, if they will send the price of the number, and mention the article wanted.

F. D. R.—You do well to avoid all cosmetics. There is nothing more attractive than a natural complexion. Here is a simple face bleach: Lemon juice, 3 ounces; rain water, 1 pint.

Doctor Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those inclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Do not send Canadian stamps or coins. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.





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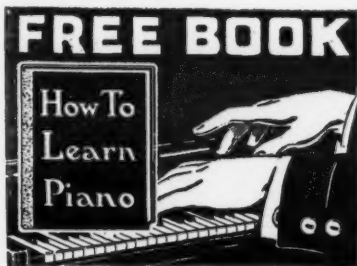


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From the Famous Sketch by Schneider, Exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition.

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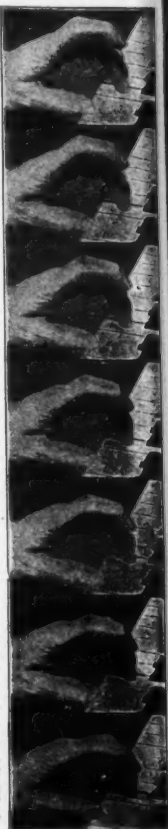
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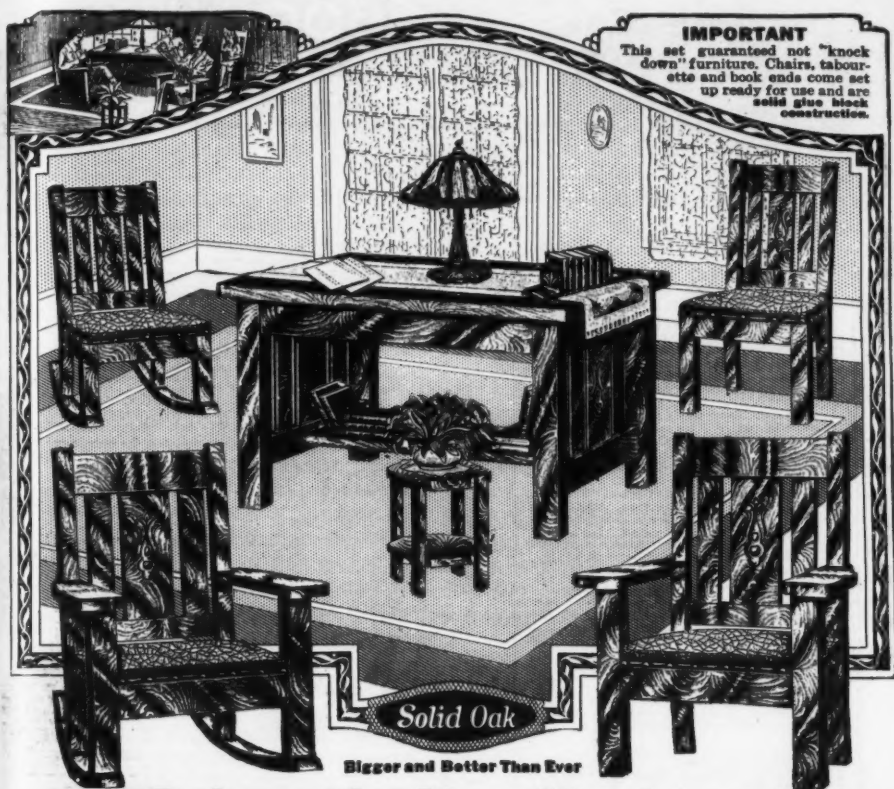
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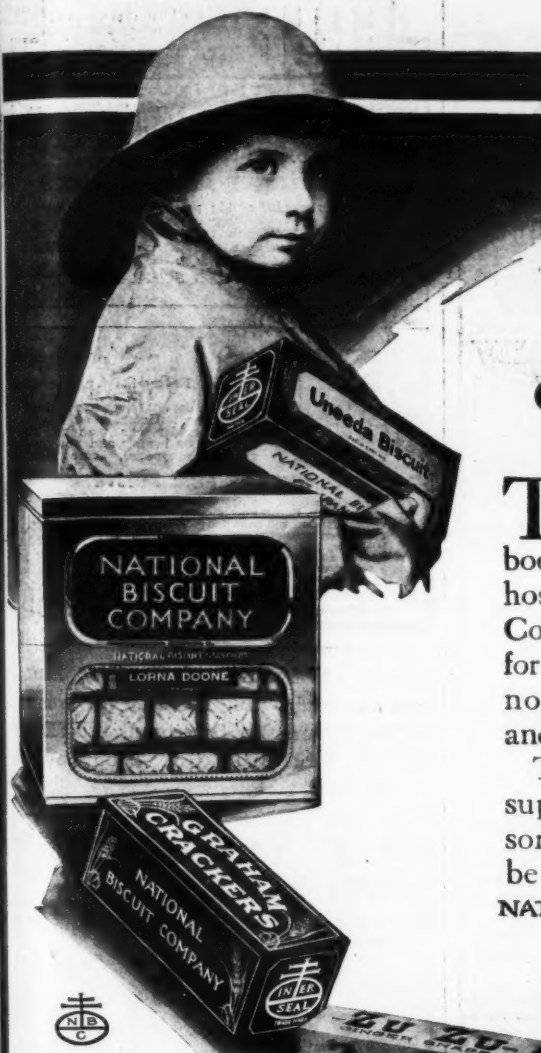
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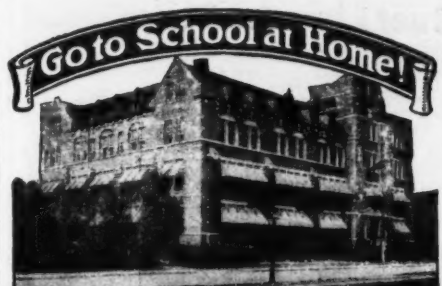
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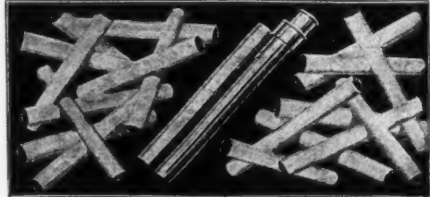


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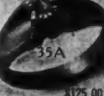
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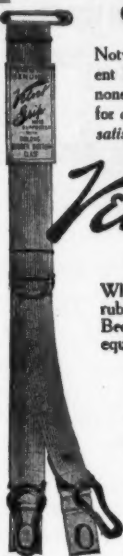
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Besides giving an unusually penetrating and faithful portrait of the great comedian's whimsical personality, Mr. Howe relates many interesting anecdotes about Charlie: How his mother taught him pantomime as she held him on her knee and urged him to imitate the passers-by in the London street; of his first dramatic appearance—"The Teacher and the Scholar;" of the curious way in which he received the news that he could earn a million a year; of his delight in charades and his imitation of Mary Pickford; how he gathers ideas and how he directed "The Kid;" of his domestic dénouement—

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LA ROSE'S EYEBRIGHT, a simple, absolutely harmless preparation, will positively strengthen weak and tired eyes, and help to make them clear, strong, bright, and alert.

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You read in this and other good magazines on how to take care of your hands, face, hair, eyelashes, but nothing is said about the most important and beautiful organ of the human body—*eyes*.

Nature intended your eyes to be strong, bright, and beautiful, but hardly anyone takes care of their eyes until too late, and then expensive specialists are necessary.

20,000,000 Americans wear glasses, mostly because they neglect their eyes.

By using LA ROSE'S EYEBRIGHT you not only add to the beauty and brightness of your eyes. You strengthen them against possible future weakness and many expensive eye specialists.

LA ROSE'S EYEBRIGHT is perfectly harmless. It will improve your eyes 100%. We will cheerfully return your money if LA ROSE'S EYEBRIGHT does not satisfy you in every way.

Send one dollar to

La Rose Co.
225 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

TEAR OFF THIS COUPON

LA ROSE CO.,

225 Fifth Ave., Room 407, N. Y. City

I send herewith one dollar for one bottle of La Rose's Eyebright. If not satisfactory you agree to return money upon request.

Name

Address

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

GET MORE MILEAGE

With Strong, Double-Tread Tires!
Guaranteed for 5000 Miles



Strong Double-Tread Reconstructed Tires are made by our skilled mechanics, of double the amount of fabric (from choice material), and are built to give more than the guaranteed mileage and service which our customers very often receive.

RELINER FREE
Tubes Guaranteed Fresh Stock

Size	Tires	Tubes	Size	Tires	Tubes
20x2	\$5.50	\$1.60	34x4	\$8.75	\$2.60
30x4	4.50	1.75	34x4 1/2	10.00	3.00
31x3 1/2	6.75	1.85	36x4 1/2	11.00	3.15
32x3 1/2	7.00	2.00	36x4 3/4	11.50	3.40
31x4	8.00	2.25	36x5	12.50	3.60
32x4	8.25	2.40	36x5 1/2	12.75	3.65
33x4	8.50	2.50	37x5	12.75	3.75

Send \$2.00 deposit for each tire ordered, balance C. O. D. Tires shipped subject to your examination. State whether S. S. or Cl. plain or non-skid is desired. All same price. By sending full amount of order you can save 5 per cent—our special cash-with-order discount.

STRONG TIRE AND RUBBER CO.
3019 Michigan Ave. Dept. 334 Chicago, Ill.

"DON'T SHOUT"



"I can hear you with the MORLEY PHONE." It is invisible, weightless, comfortable, inexpensive. No metal, wires nor rubber. Can be used by anyone, young or old. The Morley Phone for the

DEAF

is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. Write for Free Booklet containing testimonials of users all over the country. It describes causes of deafness; tells how and why the MORLEY PHONE affords relief. Over one hundred thousand sold.



THE MORLEY CO., Dept. 758, 26 S. 15 St., Phila.

FREE \$20



TENOR BANJO Ukulele, Hawaiian Guitar, Violin, Mandolin, Guitar, Cornet or Banjo

Wonderful new system of teaching notes music by mail. To first pupils in each locality, we give Violin, Mandolin, Ukulele, Guitar, Hawaiian Guitar, Cornet, Tenor Banjo or Banjo absolutely free. Very small charge for lessons only. We guarantee success or no charge. Complete course free. Write now. No obligation.

SLINGERLAND SCHOOL OF MUSIC, Inc. Dept. 35 CHICAGO, ILL.



LUCKY HORSESHOE RING
ON 7 DAYS TRIAL

Believed by many to be a Charm of Good Luck. The Horseshoe Top is Solid Gold and the Nail Solid Silver, set with Genuine Garnet. It is odd, unique attractive, admired by everybody. Send your name, address and ring measure (strip of paper around finger). When you receive Ring, pay \$4.95. Wear it seven days and follow the seven golden rules which come with Ring. All your money back if not entirety satisfied.

NOSMOS CO., Dept. D, 828 North Clark Str., Chicago



A Big Raise in Salary

Is Very Easy to Get, if You Go About It in the Right Way

You have often heard of others who doubled and trebled their salaries in a year's time. You wondered how they did it. Was it a pull? Don't you think it. When a man is hired he gets paid for exactly what he does, there is no sentiment in business. It's preparing for the future and knowing what to do at the right time that doubles and trebles salaries.

Remember When You Were a Kid

and tried to ride a bike for the very first time? You thought that you would never learn and then— all of a sudden you knew how, and said in surprise: "Why it's a cinch if you know how." It's that way with most things, and getting a job with big money is no exception to the rule, if you know how.

We Will Show You How

Without loss to you of a single working hour we can show you a sure way to success and big pay. A large number of men in each of the positions listed are enjoying their salaries because of our help—we want to help you. Make check on the coupon against the job you want and we will help you get it. Write or print your name on the coupon and send it in today.

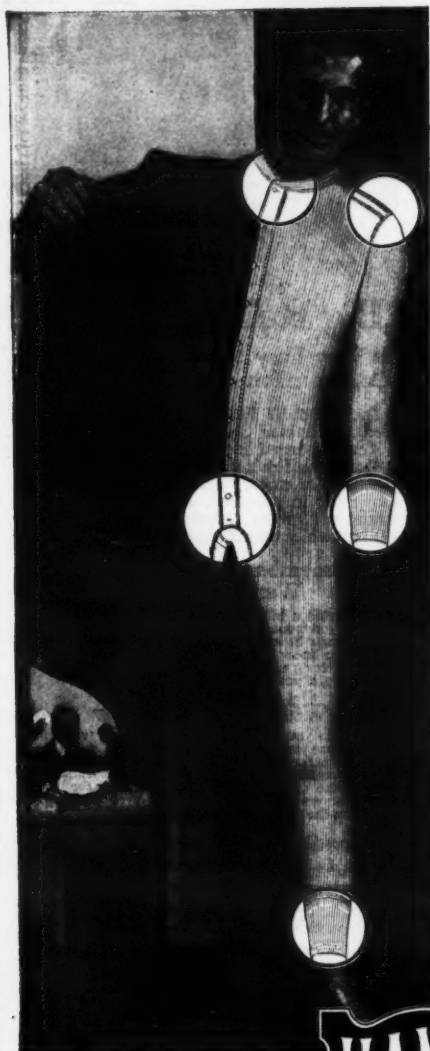
American School of Correspondence
Dept. G-74, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

American School of Correspondence,
Dept. G-74, Chicago, Ill.

I want job checked—tell me how to get it.

.....Architect.	.....Lawyer.
.....Building Contractor \$5,000 to \$15,000	.....Mechanical Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000
.....Automobile Engineer \$5,000 to \$10,000	.....Shop Superintendent \$3,000 to \$7,000
.....Automobile Repairman \$4,000 to \$10,000	.....Employment Manager \$4,000 to \$10,000
.....Civil Engineer \$2,500 to \$4,000	.....Steam Engineer \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Structural Engineer \$5,000 to \$15,000	.....Foreman's Course \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Business Manager \$4,000 to \$10,000	.....Photoplay Writer \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Certified Public Accountant \$5,000 to \$15,000	.....Sanitary Engineer \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Accountant and Auditor \$7,000 to \$15,000	.....Telephone Engineer \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....Draftsman and Designer \$2,500 to \$7,000	.....Telegraph Engineer \$2,500 to \$5,000
.....Electrical Engineer \$2,500 to \$4,000	.....High School Graduate \$2,500 to \$5,000
.....General Education \$4,000 to \$10,000	.....Fire Insurance Expert \$2,000 to \$4,000
.....in one year.	

Name..... Address.....



Hanes Guarantee:

"We guarantee Hanes Underwear absolutely—every thread, stitch and button. We guarantee to return your money or give you a new garment if any seam breaks."



**ELASTIC KNIT
UNDERWEAR**

Confidence in "Hanes" winter underwear can never be misplaced!

"HANES" underwear for men has been a standard for years! Beyond any question it is the best value in actual quality, comfort and service ever sold at the price!

Behind every "Hanes" process, behind every thread and stitch, the "Hanes" guarantee looms up! This guarantee is your assurance of absolute satisfaction.

Examine "Hanes" critically. You never saw—or bought—such real and true underwear service.

"Hanes" is made in heavy and medium weight Union Suits and heavy weight Shirts and Drawers.

This year we present the new yellow label medium weight, silk faced Union Suit, made of full combed yarn particularly for indoor men.

Like "Hanes" heavy weight Union Suits the new medium weight suit has the extra gusset which adds so greatly to comfort across your thighs; tailored, snug-fitting collarette; closed crotch that stays closed; buttonholes that last the life of the garment; elastic knit, shape holding arm and leg cuffs. Shirts have the "Hanes" elastic knit collarette that will not gap; sateen vent; elastic knit cuffs. Drawers have a durable 3-button sateen waist band.

Hanes Union Suits for boys never have been equalled

They duplicate the men's Union Suits in all important features—with added cosy fleeciness. Made in sizes 20 to 34, covering ages from 2 to 16 years. Two to four year old sizes have drop seat. Four desirable colors.

Inspect "Hanes" underwear at your dealers. Put it in strict comparison with any underwear near the price. If your dealer cannot supply you, write us immediately.

P. H. HANES KNITTING CO.

Winston-Salem, N. C.

New York Office: 366 Broadway

Warning to the trade: Any garment offered as "Hanes" is a substitute unless it bears the "Hanes" label.

Next Summer=You'll want to wear Hanes Nainsook Union Suits!



The Hands that do the Labor wear the Gloves-Boss Gloves

—wear them for protection from paint, dust, grease, dirt and minor injuries.

—wear them because they wear *well*, yet in spite of their tough texture allow a free "feel" of the work.

—wear them because they slip on and off *easily*, are comfortable—and *economical*.

—wear them because they are easy to get *anywhere* in any style or weight desired.

—wear them because they *always* have worn them—and *found them satisfactory*.

—wear them because millions of other hands are wearing them in hundreds of different lines of work.

Ask your dealer. He carries Boss Work Gloves. Three kinds of wrists, band, ribbed, and gauntlet. Sizes for men and women, boys and girls.

THE BOSS MEEDY—The world's favorite work glove for odd jobs around the house and garden, and all light handwork. Made of the best quality, medium weight canton flannel.

THE BOSS HEVY—The best bet for all work that requires a strong, wear-resisting glove. Made of the very best quality, heavy weight canton flannel.

THE BOSS XTRA HEVY—The world's champion heavy-weight hand-wear for rough work. Made of the finest grade of extra heavy canton flannel.

THE BOSS WALLOPER—This is the super work glove. Strong, flexible and built for rugged work. Made of the highest quality, heaviest weight canton flannel.

The Boss line includes highest quality leather-palm, jersey, ticking, and canton flannel gloves and mittens

THE BOSS MANUFACTURING CO., Kewanee, Ill.



Trade

Mark

This Trade-mark identifies genuine Boss Work Gloves. Be sure it's on every pair you buy.

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

The Brunswick Method of Reproduction



No More Scratching Noises— Instead, *Pure* reproduction

One of the foremost features of the Brunswick Method of Reproduction is the Ultona, as pictured above.

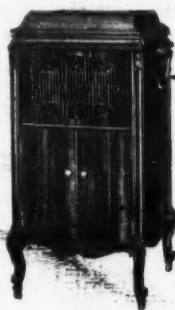
It plays all makes of records—at a turn of the hand it presents the correct needle and diaphragm. Each record is played at its best, without the bother of attachments.

But another great advantage of the Ultona is that it ends those "surface noises" or scratching sounds formerly associated with phonographic music. It is the *only counter-balanced* reproducer and tone arm—and this patent is the secret of purer reproduction.

Contact between needle and record is so perfectly bal-

anced that all those old-time and disagreeable noises are banished.

To prove Brunswick Superiority, hear different records played on it. Note their greater clarity and charm. You've never heard any record at its best until you've heard it on The Brunswick.



A Brunswick dealer will be glad to explain the Ultona and other remarkable advancements made possible by the Brunswick Method of Reproduction.

Ask to Hear Brunswick Records

Played on any phonograph with steel or fibre needles. They, too, offer betterments.

THE BRUNSWICK-BALKE-COLLENDER COMPANY

General Offices: 623-633 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago

Branch Houses in Principal Cities of United States, Mexico and Canada

Canadian Distributors: Musical Merchandise Sales Co., 77 Wellington St., West, Toronto, Ont.

Brunswick
PHONOGRAPHS AND RECORDS

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements



Teach Them
To Say
“Hires”

HIRES is good for all ages—at all times. Every one of the sixteen Hires ingredients is a product of Nature from the woods and fields, collected from all parts of the world.

Nothing goes into Hires but the pure healthful juices of roots, barks, herbs, berries—and pure cane sugar. The quality of Hires is maintained in spite of tremendously increased cost of ingredients. Yet you pay no more for Hires the genuine than you do for an artificial imitation.

But be sure you say “Hires” to get Hires. At fountains, or in bottles, at your dealers. Keep a case at home and always have Hires on ice as first aid to parched palates.

THE CHARLES E. HIRES COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA

Hires

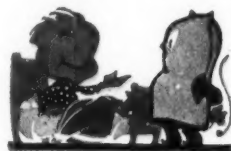
Hires contains juices of 16 roots, barks, herbs and berries

This ghost was a 1920 model



LAST MONTH, on a bet.
WITH THE boys up home.
I SPENT a night.
ALONE IN the old.
HAUNTED HOUSE.
AND WHEN I heard.
MOANS AND groans.
I SAID "The wind."
AND TRIED to sleep.
I HEARD rappings.
AND SAID "Rats."
AND ROLLED over.
THEN I heard steps.
AND IN the light.
OF A dying moon.
A WHITE spook rose.
I WASN'T scared—much.
BUT DIDN'T feel like.
STARTING ANYTHING.
BUT THEN I caught.
JUST A faint whiff.
OF A familiar.

AND DELICIOUS smell.
WHICH TIPPED me off.
SO I gave the ghost.
THE HORSE laugh.
AND SAID "Ed.
YOU FAT guys.
MAKE BUM ghosts.
BUT BEFORE you fade.
LEAVE WITH me one.
OF YOUR cigarettes.
THEY SATISFY."



THAT spicy, delicious aroma of fine tobaccos, both Turkish and Domestic, makes you almost hungry for the "satisfy-smoke." And there isn't a ghost of a chance you'll ever find its equal anywhere—for the Chesterfield blend is an exclusive blend. It can't be copied.

They Satisfy **Chesterfield**
CIGARETTES
Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co.

5

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